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SHOOT!

25p

5th SEPTEMBER, 1981

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**ALL-TIME
WINNERS
POSTER**

SHOOT'S ALL-TIME WINNERS

WHERE THE MAJOR HONOURS HAVE GONE SINCE FOOTBALL BEGAN

SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION CHAMPIONS

FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

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SHOOT'S new signing PHIL THOMPSON of Liverpool & England

THE Liverpool red machine is all geared up and raring to go, determined to make up for last season's failure.

Failure? With the European Cup adorning our boardroom for a record third time, and right alongside it the League Cup for the first time in Anfield history!

But there's something missing — the symbol that marks a team the best in the land — the League Championship trophy.

It was a great disappointment for us when we reached the stage last season where we realised we were too many points adrift in the title race and had to watch Aston Villa surge ahead.

Not that I begrudge Ron Saunders' Villa their reward. You can argue about whether a team deserve to win a Cup because so much can depend on luck in a sudden death competition.

A bad bounce, a poor decision by the ref, injuries to key players. But there's no disputing a Champion's right to wear the crown.

Our bid to become Champions for the third season in a row foundered on the Anfield treatment tables, when we had so many walk-

ing wounded we had to draft in more reserves than ever before.

Not having a settled side meant we couldn't serve up our best football and give entertainment value.

But that's in the past. It's the future that dominates the talk at Anfield right now, as we prepare to launch ourselves into the new season after a heavy programme of warm up games.

We've played in Switzerland, Spain and Ireland. It was strange, though, not making the trip to Wembley to play in the Charity Shield. Must remedy that next year.

Challengers

Among the other 21 other teams in the Division, a handful stand out as our main challengers for the Championship. Aston Villa and Ipswich among them, of course.

To me, Ipswich are the most dangerous, pose the biggest threat because they are better balanced, mainly through having the two Dutchmen, Frans Thijssen and Arnold Muhren, in their line-up.

I can look forward to some hard times against Paul Mariner, my England team-mate, who came back



Phil proudly raises the European Cup, won for the third time by Liverpool last June.

The "sleeping giant" of Manchester United looks like being roused by new boss Ron Atkinson. United are a team to watch out for.

I'd like to say the same for Manchester City, who played so well in the F.A. Cup Final, but the side needs an injection of several new players to mount a serious challenge for the Championship. Manager John Bond must have been very disappointed not to bring Peter Barnes back to Maine Road. West Brom are the sort of side that'll be on the fringe, ready to join the leaders if one of them should falter.

From the two London clubs, I'd pick Arsenal as more of a potential problem than Spurs, because they are so difficult to break down and beat.

But with the Spurs defence strengthened by my old mate Ray Clemence, they could become title-chasers.

Everton have so many new players the team, a mystery to Goodison fans even, couldn't possibly become organised enough to reach for the Championship. The board seem to have made a good choice for the managership in Howard Kendall, who starred in their 1970 Championship side, and who did a fine job at Blackburn Rovers.

'Winning a cup is a bonus'

Whatever else happens, Everton can be certain to give Liverpool a couple of hard games to decide who are top dogs on Merseyside.

If things had turned out differently, I could be playing for Everton now!

You see, my Dad was a Blues supporter. But my Mum favoured Liverpool, and while Dad was away from home with the Merchant Navy, she'd take me to stand on the Kop and cheer on The Reds.

On Merseyside; where I was born and bred, you're either for Liverpool or Everton, and that's how my allegiance, in a divided house, was decided.

Mind you, after I signed for Liverpool as an apprentice, Dad gradually switched, often pointing out to people he'd always had a soft spot for the "other team".

This Saturday I'll be leading Liverpool out against Wolves at Molineux. We have a score to settle with John Barnwell's side, who beat us 4-1 at their place last season.

Every team aims to start well. If it succeeds, it provides a big psychological boost that can lead to lots of silver loot!

See you!

Best Wishes
Phil Thompson

'Title our number one target'



Villa's Gary Shaw is tackled by Ipswich's Russell Osman in last season's League clash at Villa Park.

'Ipswich better balanced than Villa'

into form with a big bang last season.

Villa are a younger, less experienced team and they are going to be under added pressure through being Champions.

Every other team will be extra-motivated to beat them in the belief it means something special. Each game takes on the atmosphere of a Cup-tie, with a big build-up in the Press during the week, and a boosted gate away from home.

Test

A glance at past League tables shows that few Champions pass the test and hold on to the title. Such as Arsenal, Liverpool — and Villa! So maybe Ron Saunders and his lads — among them two from my home town of Kirkby, Dennis Mortimer and Kenny Swain — can take heart from that!

Villa will also be taking part in the European Cup. If we do meet them, I hope it's in the later stages, like the Final itself!

Questions to be answered this season



WITH so many questions to be answered, this season promises to be one of the most crucial in soccer history.

Will three points for a win, the first significant change in the Laws for over 60 years, make an appreciable difference to our League system?

Will clubs respond by providing more action as they go all out to score goals, or hang on to a 1-0 lead in an effort to snatch maximum points?

Can clubs survive mounting financial pressure as gates drop and players make increasing wage demands?

Will the hooligan problem drive more fans away from terraces already starved of fans on the dole?

Can all four of the Home nations and the Republic of Ireland qualify for the World Cup Finals for the first time?

Attacked

From England's point of view the major domestic trophies were won by teams who attacked with style ... Aston Villa, Spurs and Liverpool.

Will this new season see victories for the clubs who go forward and entertain?

Will more players show respect for referees? Some of last season's tantrums were a disgrace and sadly copied by the young generation of footballers at professional and junior club level.

Will more players and managers show loyalty to their clubs by honouring contracts after signing them?

Will directors fulfil their promise not to sack managers during the season?

All these vital questions will be answered this season and SHOOT will be there when they are.

Our coverage of all the world's major events is unrivalled and has firmly established us as Britain's leading soccer magazine.

I'll leave you now to enjoy SHOOT's bumper 56 page start-of-the-season issue which includes our full colour All Time Winners poster free.

Happy reading ...

Peter Stewart
EDITOR

The new season bursts into life this Saturday. Kevin Keegan's return monopolised headlines last August. Who will capture the fans' imagination this time? SHOOT previews a spectacular opener to the 1981-82 Football League season ...

THE Football League's computer programmer has developed a very happy knack over the past four years of compiling a fascinating formula with which to kick-off a new season.

In 1978 the computer conjured up League Champions Nottingham Forest against Tottenham Hotspur, complete with Ardiles and Villa for the first time.

In 1979 all eyes were on the Goldstone Ground when Brighton made their First Division bow against Arsenal.

Last year we had Kevin Keegan's comeback to British soccer with Southampton entertaining Manchester City.

And this time — well the computer has done it again. With an ironic twist of almost human

humour it has pitched together Coventry City and Manchester United — so Dave Sexton gets an immediate crack at the club that sacked him.

There are some spanking matches all over the country which should get the turnstiles clicking again, and let's hope this is a sign of things to come throughout a season which will be so vital in the build-up to the World Cup.

The city of Manchester will grab many of the headlines on the season's opening day. While the

curtain goes up at Coventry for Sexton v Atkinson, at Maine Road the beaten F.A. Cup Finalists Manchester City will be taking on another Midlands giant in West Brom, Atkinson's last charges.

If things had worked out as John Bond planned, he would have had Peter Barnes playing against his old club. As it is he starts with a squad he claims is just not good

AWAY

enough and without any money to improve it. Albion's Ronnie Allen has had a busy summer, selling Barnes, haggling over money with Bryan Robson, and giving Steve Mackenzie his Albion debut against his former club.

Champions Aston Villa will not complain about their opener and they'll be a home banker against Notts County, playing in the First Division for the first time in 55 years.

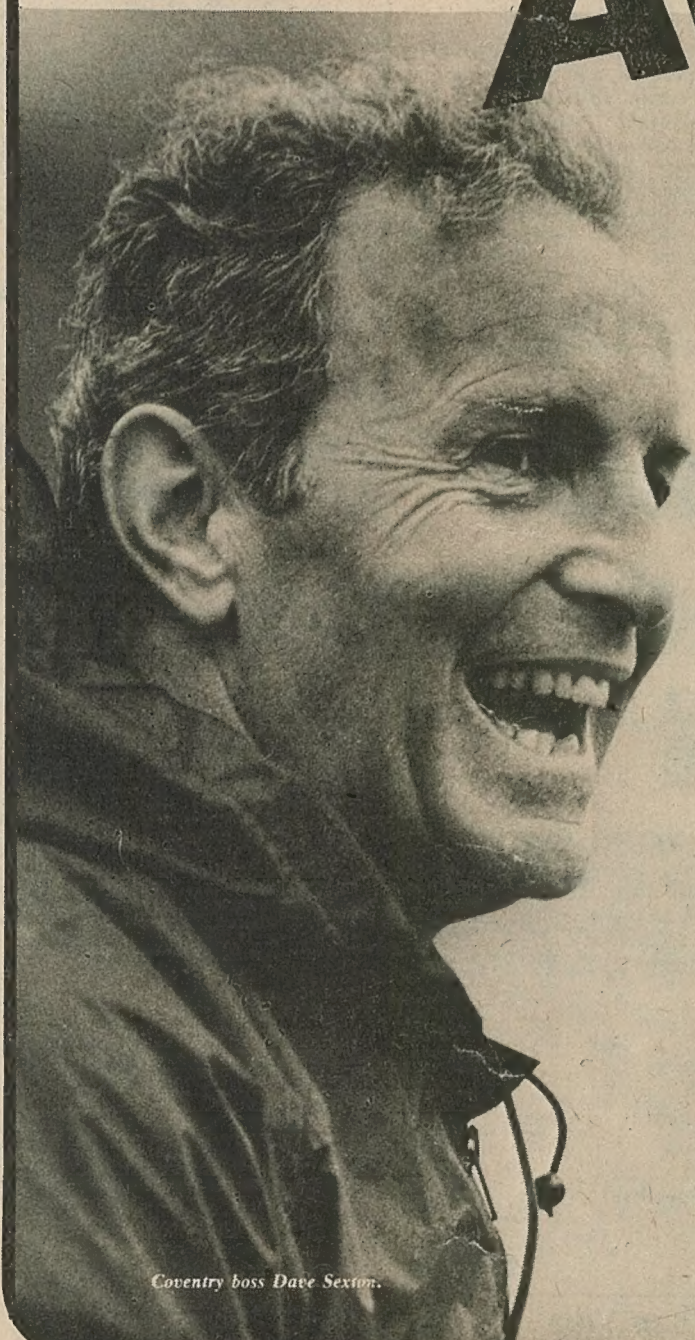
And still in the Midlands, Wolves will be looking forward to entertaining European Champions Liverpool, who were thrashed 4-1 at Molineux last season.

Fervour

Nowhere will there be greater passion and fervour, though, than at the Vetch Field, Swansea. After 61 years the Welshmen have finally reached the upper echelons of the game and to mark their First Division debut The Swans will have Leeds United as visitors.

To make the day all the more romantic Swansea's attack could include former Leeds striker Alan Curtis, while Leeds parade their own new hero Peter Barnes.

The third of the promoted clubs, West Ham, come back with more



Coventry boss Dave Sexton.

DIVISION I

	HOME			AWAY			
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A Villa	42	16	3	2	40	13	10
Ipswich	42	15	4	2	45	14	8
Arsenal	42	13	8	0	38	17	6
WBA	42	15	4	2	40	15	5
L'pool	42	13	5	3	38	15	4
Soton	42	15	4	2	47	22	5
Nottm F	42	15	3	3	44	20	4
Man Utd	42	9	11	1	30	14	6
Leeds	42	10	5	6	19	19	7
Spurs	42	9	9	3	44	31	5
Stoke	42	8	9	4	31	23	4
Man City	42	10	7	4	35	25	4
B'ghm	42	11	5	5	32	23	2
Mdbro	42	14	4	3	38	16	2
Evt'n	42	8	6	7	32	25	5
Cvtry	42	9	6	6	31	30	4
S'drid	42	10	4	7	32	19	4
Wolves	42	11	2	8	26	20	2
B'ghtn	42	10	3	8	30	26	4
Nrwch	42	9	7	5	34	25	4
Lcster	42	7	5	9	20	23	6
C Pal	42	6	4	11	32	37	0

belief in themselves than they've had for nearly 20 years, and there'll be a marvellous, bubbly atmosphere at Upton Park for the visit of Brighton.

There'll be no shortage of interest, either, in the offering at the City Ground — Nottingham Forest v Southampton. It's a repeat of that fine 1979 League Cup Final, and a battle between two sides who were locked together in the search for the last European place last season.

repeat of last season's hat-trick against the Cup winners.

After virtually emptying the Goodison Park cheque book Howard Kendall now faces the moment of truth as his embryo Everton take on his old club Birmingham City — complete with ex-Blues favourite Alan Ainscow.

That should be an interesting one, and equally Arsenal against Stoke City will have its attraction for the North Londoners.

That leaves Ipswich Town against Sunderland — and as the teams take the field at Portman Road no doubt Bobby Robson will glance at the Sunderland dug-out and cast his mind back to the offer he had to take over at Roker Park.

DAY



Cloughie and McMenemy will have something up their sleeve for opening day and this one could produce a feast of good football.

The same could be said of Middlesbrough against Tottenham Hotspur, though the home club are now denuded of Proctor, Armstrong, Johnston and Jankovic. Their striker David Hodgson will be looking for a



Alan Curtis (left) will be looking to upset his old Leeds team-mates at Swansea, while Forest and Southampton (above) stage a repeat of the 1979 League Cup Final at the City Ground.

Alan Durban will be sitting there at the start of a new adventure for him, and he'll think he's done well if he squeezes anything out of the UEFA Cup holders.

The Second Division has some appetising fare, too, and South Yorkshire will have an electric air among the coalmines.

Barnsley, with Norman Hunter snapping at Shrewsbury's legs, are

back in the Second Division after 22 years, and down the road at Rotherham Emlyn Hughes will get his introduction to management as the Merry Millers, also back after a gap of 13 years, take on relegated Norwich City.

Sheffield Wednesday meanwhile take a shortish trip to Blackburn for a meeting of two clubs who came close but no better last season.

The third of the promoted clubs, Charlton Athletic, are also required to go a short distance, and Alan Mullery will enjoy his first match as manager of The Valiants, at Luton. Someone who could enjoy it even more is Charlton striker Derek Hales who has already once scored a hat-trick against the club



that released him and would love to repeat the dose.

Looking at the clubs who came down, Norwich will find that trip to Rotherham uncomfortable, and Leicester may have triumphed at Liverpool, but they won't get any favours at Grimsby.

Crystal Palace will be more confident on their own pitch against Cambridge.

If Chelsea fail to score against Bolton at Stamford Bridge they'll extend to ten their sequence of matches without a goal.

Highlight of the Third Division could be Carlisle United against Bristol City. It's going to be a long, punishing journey for the team that had only just left the First Division a year ago, and they'll have to watch Pop Robson's

scoring prowess to prevent it being an even longer journey home.

Bristol Rovers have a home date with Chester and their manager Terry Cooper will no doubt cast his mind back to an unhappy night in 1974 when he was a member of that mighty Leeds side which actually lost 3-0 at Chester in the League Cup.

Promoted Doncaster will draw a huge crowd for the visit of Reading and you can bank on a five-figure gate at Portsmouth where another promoted club Lincoln City will be in town.

With an eye to the fans, the



Middlesbrough's David Hodgson (left) would love to repeat last season's hat-trick against Spurs, while Charlton's Derek Hales (above) could do the same versus Luton.

computer has also come up with a derby in London — Fulham against Brentford. Tommy Docherty is also in the capital with his Preston side at Millwall.

Whoever would have thought a year ago we'd have been talking about Sheffield United and Blackpool as Fourth Division clubs? Well we are and it's when you read Blackpool v Stockport County and Sheffield United v Hereford United that you realise what a great leveller football can be.

Two more men reflecting that very point will be former England centre-halves Roy McFarland and Larry Lloyd. They'll be face to face as respective player-managers of Bradford and Wigan.

HOW THEY FINISHED LAST SEASON

DIVISION II

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F A	P	W	D	L	F A	Pts
W Ham	42	19	1	1	53 12	9	9	3	26	17 66	
N Cnty	42	10	8	3	26 15	8	9	4	23	23 53	
Swansea	42	12	5	4	39 19	6	9	6	25	25 50	
Blickburn	42	12	8	1	28 7	4	10	7	14	22 50	
Luton	42	10	6	5	35 23	8	6	7	26	23 48	
Derby	42	9	8	4	34 26	6	7	8	23	26 45	
Grimsby	42	10	8	3	21 10	5	7	9	23	32 45	
QPR	42	11	7	3	36 12	4	6	11	20	34 43	
Watford	42	13	5	3	34 18	3	6	12	16	27 43	
Shef W	42	14	4	3	38 14	3	4	14	15	37 42	
Newcastle	42	11	7	3	22 13	3	7	11	8	32 42	
Chelsea	42	8	6	7	27 15	6	6	9	19	26 40	
Cambridge	42	13	1	7	36 23	4	5	12	17	42 40	
Shrewsbury	42	9	7	5	33 22	2	10	9	13	25 39	
Oldham	42	7	9	5	19 16	5	6	10	20	32 39	
Wrexham	42	5	8	8	22 24	7	6	8	21	21 38	
Orient	42	9	8	4	34 20	4	4	13	18	36 38	
Bolton	42	10	5	6	40 27	4	5	12	21	39 38	
Cardiff	42	7	7	7	23 24	5	5	11	21	36 36	
Preston	42	8	7	6	28 26	3	7	11	13	36 36	
Bristol C	42	6	10	5	19 15	1	6	14	10	36 30	
Bristol R	42	4	9	8	21 24	1	4	16	13	41 23	

DIVISION III

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F A	P	W	D	L	F A	Pts
Rotherham	46	17	6	0	43 8	7	7	9	19	24 61	
Barnsley	46	15	5	3	46 19	6	12	5	26	26 59	
Charlton	46	14	6	3	36 17	11	3	9	27	27 59	
Huddersfield	46	14	6	3	40 11	7	8	8	31	29 56	
Chesham	46	17	4	2	42 16	6	6	11	30	32 56	
Portsmouth	46	14	5	4	35 19	8	4	11	20	28 53	
Plymouth	46	14	5	4	35 18	5	9	9	21	26 52	
Burnley	46	13	5	5	37 21	5	9	9	23	27 50	
Brentford	46	7	9	7	30 25	7	10	6	22	24 47	
Reading	46	13	5	5	39 22	5	5	13	23	40 46	
Exeter	46	9	9	5	36 30	7	4	12	26	36 45	
Newport	46	11	6	6	38 22	4	7	12	26	39 43	
Fulham	46	8	7	8	28 29	7	6	10	29	35 43	
Oxford	46	7	8	8	20 24	6	9	8	19	23 43	
Gillingham	46	9	8	6	23 19	3	10	10	25	39 42	
Millwall	46	10	9	4	30 21	4	5	14	13	39 42	
Swindon	46	10	6	7	35 27	3	9	11	16	29 41	
Sheff U	46	11	5	7	25 17	4	6	13	13	31 41	
Carlisle	46	8	9	6	32 29	6	4	13	24	41 41	
Walsall	46	8	9	6	43 43	5	6	12	16	31 41	
Sheff U	46	12	6	5	38 20	2	6	15	27	43 40	
Colchester	46	12	7	4	35 22	2	4	17	10	43 39	
Blackpool	46	5	9	9	19 28	4	5	14	26	47 32	
Hull	46	7	8	8	23 22	1	8	14	17	49 32	

DIVISION IV

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F A	P	W	D	L	F A	Pts
Southend	46	19	4	0	47 6	11	3	9	32	25 67	
Lincoln	46	15	7	1	44 11	10	8	5	22	14 65	
Doncaster	46	15	4	4	36 20	7	8	8	23	29 56	
Wimbledon	46	15	4	4	42 17	8	5	10	22	29 55	
Peterborough	46	11	8	4	37 21	6	10	7	31	33 52	
Aldershot	46	12	9	2	28 11	6	5	12	15	30 50	
Mansfield	46	13	5	5	36 15	7	4	12	22	29 49	
Darlington	46	13	6	4	43 23	6	5	12	22	36 49	
Hartlepool	46	14	3	6	42 22	6	6	11	22	39 49	
N'thampton	46	11	7	5	42 26	7	6	10	23	41 49	
Wigan	46	13	4	6	29 16	5	7	11	22	39 47	
Bury	46	10	8	5	38 21	7	3	13	32	41 45	
B'rmouth	46	9	8	6	30 21	7	5	11	17	27 45	
Bradford	46	9	9	5	30 24	5	7	11	23	36 44	
Rochdale	46	11	6	6	33 25	3	9	11	27	45 43	
Scunthorpe	46	8	12	3	40 31	3	8	12	20	38 42	
Torquay	46	13	2	8	38 26	5	3	15	17	37 41	
Crewe	46	10	7	6	28 20	3	7	13	20	41 40	
Port Vale	46	10	8	5	40 23	2	7	14	17	47 39	
Stockport	46	10	5	8	29 25	6	2	15	15	32 39	
Tranmere	46	12	5	6	41 24	1	5	17	18	49 36	
Hereford	46	8	8	7	29 20	3	5	15	9	42 35	
Halifax	46	9	3	11	28 32	2	9	12	16	39 34	
York	46	10	2	11	31 23	2	7	14	16	43 33	

ALAN KENNEDY
(Liverpool)

'ONLY A CUP THIS SEASON'

ONE of the major factors in Aston Villa's success last season was that they appeared to take everyone by surprise.

At the start of the 1980-81 campaign, I don't think anyone, outside Villa Park of course, considered them to be Championship material. By the time teams had realised they were a good side, and indeed, posed a very real threat, Villa were already out in front, with their tails up, and going like a train. And having got such a good start they were determined no one was going to catch them.

And no one did, of course.

Ron Saunders obviously knew exactly what he wanted. And in assembling his team, his signings



Gordon Cowans battles hard against Liverpool's Graeme Souness (left) and Terry McDermott.

all turned out to be good ones. From what I've seen and heard of him, he's not the kind of manager to sit back on his laurels.

It's the strength of Liverpool's first team squad that's been the real reason for the club staying at

the top so long. A fact that I'm sure Mr Saunders is well aware of.

By acquiring the talents of young Andy Blair from Coventry, he's already shown he's determined to strengthen his own squad for the new season. I don't

expect him to stop there, either. Building from strength is an old Liverpool motto, and one that no one can argue with.

I certainly don't expect Villa to be one season wonders. They've got some exceptionally fine players in their side, several of whom I'm sure will get even better.

In midfield, Dennis Mortimer and Gordon Cowans are capable of destroying any side with their skill and competitiveness. While at the back, the two big lads, Allan Evans and Ken McNaught literally are twin towers of strength. Up front, too, the ever-willing Peter Withe and the ever-improving Gary Shaw pose a threat to every defence in the country.

The work-rate of the whole side last season was tremendous, and they applied themselves to various situations with true professionalism. Ron Saunders will demand, and get, the same again.

But somehow, this season I think it's going to be either the F.A. Cup or the League Cup that they're going to write their name on — and not the most glittering prize of all, the League Championship trophy.

VILLA WON'T RETAIN

YOU don't have to tell any of us down at Portman Road just how good a side Villa were last term. We know from bitter experience that they were right up there in the top bracket. Their record shows how difficult they were to beat. And they aren't going to be any easier to overcome this time, either.

Having tasted success once, everyone connected with the club will be going flat out to prove that it wasn't just a flash in the pan.

Vulnerable

But where I think they could be vulnerable is in the strength of their first team squad. But for the vital injuries we suffered at crucial times last season, I'm still convinced that it would have been our name, and not theirs, on that

'NO EASIER TO BEAT'

coveted League trophy.

Villa were very fortunate on the injury front, so their squad wasn't really tested as much as it might have been. Whether they will be as fortunate in that respect this time remains to be seen.

While we started last season just behind the Anfield side as second favourites for the League title, Villa weren't really in the serious betting. So they were able to take people by surprise.

This season, everyone will have their eyes on them from the start. Equally, every side will be putting in that little bit of extra effort against them. There's nothing like the satisfaction of beating the Champions.

JOHN WARK (Ipswich)

Ipswich's Paul Mariner is tackled by Gary Williams (no. 3)



'THE PRESSURE WILL TELL ON THEM'

EVEN at the end of last season, there were still some people ready to argue that it was Ipswich who lost the League Championship, rather than give credit to Aston Villa for winning it.

But I definitely wasn't one of them.

I thought they were a smashing side last season, and go into this campaign as Champions on merit.

The way they went at sides, taking them apart more often than not with their high-speed skill and sheer enthusiasm made them a delight to watch. So long as you weren't on the receiving end, of

TREVOR CHERRY (Leeds)

course.

I'm not saying they didn't have a weakness. But they played so much to their strengths they were able to cover up any shortcomings. They'll be exactly the same this season.

Having said that, I've got to admit I don't think they'll land the title for the second successive season. They'll be there or thereabouts, I'm sure of that. But they won't finish in the number one spot again.

Why? The pressure of being

Champions — having your reputation go before you in every game — with every side pulling out all the stops to beat you, can prove a formidable task, even for the most experienced of sides. Ask Liverpool!

Villa don't have the experience of the Anfield side — yet.

For the first half of last season, they didn't appear to be under any pressure at all. I'm sure most of the other potential Champions were convinced, because of the way they played, they wouldn't last the course.

The fact that they did is a tribute to every man-jack of them.

This term it'll be different. They'll be under pressure from the very first whistle. That's why I think they are more likely to succeed in one of the Cup competitions.

Obviously they'd love to emulate Liverpool and Nottingham Forest by carrying off the European Cup. But I've got a feeling they could struggle there, because they don't have enough players with the necessary experience of playing against the best of foreign opposition in Europe.

What they need, of course, is a couple of easy games in the early rounds to enable them to get the feel of things. Then, perhaps they could surprise us all yet again. I hope they do!

JOHN RICHARDS

(Wolves)

'THEY CAN'T EXPECT SO FEW INJURIES'

I'VE got to admit Aston Villa's success last season took me completely by surprise. And I wasn't the only one to be caught out.

In fact, if I'd been asked to select my top ten teams at the start of the season, Villa would probably have just crept in somewhere about eighth or ninth, but no higher. Once the season got under way, though, they quickly showed us all they were a force to be reckoned with.

As a team, they seemed to improve with almost every game, which obviously delighted their

Ken McNaught suffers a rare injury at Villa Park last season



manager, Ron Saunders. He's well-known for preferring solid team performances, as opposed to star turns from just one or two players.

It's a credit to them all that they finished looking as fit and as strong as when they started. And nothing has happened during the close season to suggest that they won't start this 1981-82 campaign in the same effervescent mood.

They won't need me to tell them that this time it's going to be a lot harder than last. Theirs is going to be a scalp that's bound to be much sought after.

Despite that, I'm sure they're going to be battling it out at the top once again. But I don't think they're going to be able to make it two Championships in a row.

Distraction

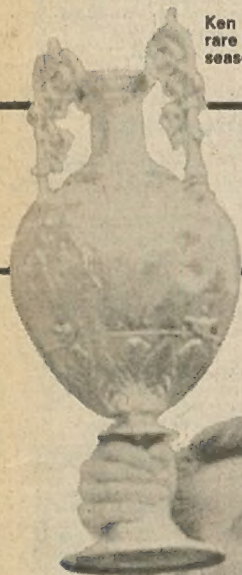
Their added involvement in Europe is bound to be a distraction. Last season they went out of the League Cup and F.A. Cup in the early stages. That left them able to concentrate all their efforts on winning the League. While their nearest rivals found themselves having to play two games a week at crucial stages of the season, Villa, for the most part, only had to face one.

They were very fortunate with injuries, too, which enabled them to keep a settled side throughout the season. So the depth of their squad wasn't really tested to any great extent. They can't really expect that kind of good fortune again.

I certainly don't expect them to finish the season empty handed, though. They're far too good a team for that. That's why I think they'll be a very good bet indeed for one of the Cup competitions.

And looking further ahead, I fully expect them to establish themselves as a real force in English football during the 80's.

THE TITLE



Next week star writer Gary Shaw gives his views on the new season and Villa's chances of further success.

Dennis Mortimer, Kenny Swain and Allan Evans — determined to keep a grip on the League Championship trophy.

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EVERTON'S STAR SIGNING APOLOGISES



THE first thing that big Mick Ferguson did after signing for Everton was to apologise to the Notts County manager, Jimmy Sirrell.

Mick said: "County were very interested in signing me but they could not agree upon the transfer fee with Coventry. They hoped that the deal would go through following a tribunal.

"In the meantime Everton became interested and I had no hesitation about going to Goodison Park.

"I knew the deal was right from the moment I met Howard Kendall. He is a smashing chap.

"He quickly impressed me that Everton are a club who want to do well and in view of my problems over the past two seasons I welcomed an opportunity of getting regular first team soccer."

Jobs for the boys at Albion

WEST BROMWICH ALBION'S old boys' network has already been put into operation by new manager Ronnie Allen.

Besides the appointment of John Wile as player-coach, the Albion boss has promoted youth team coach Albert McPherson to second team coach and brought in ex-Albion forward Ken Hodgkisson as youth team coach.

The promotion of McPherson is fully deserved for his loyal service and work over the past few years which helped to produce several first team players including Bryan Robson, Martyn Bennett, Derek Statham and Remi Moses of the present first team.

Meanwhile, Ally Robertson, West Bromwich Albion's long serving defender, has resolved his differences with the Midlands club and is staying at The Hawthorns.

Robertson, who has had such a good partnership with Albion skipper John Wile, said: "I've never really wanted to leave Albion but certain circumstances forced me to ask for a move last season.

"Now I am happy to be staying and I'm hoping to win a regular first team place again under the managership of Ronnie Allen."

Allen had no trouble sorting out the problems for Robertson, and this was fully appreciated by the Scot.

Phil's cricket mad

PHIL FISHER, a 23-year-old winger with Exeter, couldn't have enjoyed his summer break more. He was playing cricket for his local team — Ammanford, who play in the South Wales League.

Fisher played soccer for Ammanford in the Welsh League and also had Southern League experience with Bridgend Town. He also won the Southern Championship with Bridgend.

Fergie follows Fergie

NEW East Stirling manager Martin Ferguson is hoping to follow in big brother's footsteps.

Aberdeen boss Alex also started his managerial career with the Firs Park club before moving to St. Mirren and then Pittodrie.

Martin, who served Partick Thistle and Bury as a player, succeeds Billy Lamont who replaced Sean Fallon at Dumbarton in a hectic close season of managerial changes in Scotland.

● MARTIN BLACKLER, a versatile 18-year-old on Swindon's books, doesn't have to worry about the laws of the game. His father is a local Swindon referee.

Blackler, who can play in midfield, back four or as a sweeper, is a former captain of Swindon schoolboys.

Fun turns sour

FOOTBALLERS should always check if competitions outside of club business are affiliated.

A Cleveland six-a-side tournament backfired on players when Hartlepool midfielder Mark Lawrence broke a leg. Four Hartlepool players were fined by their club and players from Drybroughs Northern League clubs Whitby and South Bank face disciplinary action from the North Riding F.A.

The players entered the tournament for "a bit of fun" to prepare for the new season. Sadly the tournament was abandoned when Lawrence received a double fracture.

Mike Docherty setback



MIKE Docherty (above), who was caretaker manager at Sunderland at the end of last season, stayed as coach when Alan Durban was appointed.

And it wasn't long before Docherty's form in the pre-season training sessions impressed Durban, who knew that a knee injury forced the 30-year-old son of Tommy to quit two years ago.

Durban decided that Docherty was just the man to add steel to Sunderland's midfield, but the idea was eventually dropped after advice from experts.



AT THE DOUBLE! Sheffield Wednesday's Charlie Williamson (right) just couldn't believe it when he arrived back at Hillsborough for pre-season training, to find his double in the shape of Gary Bannister who manager Jack Charlton bought from Coventry for £100,000 during the summer.

Charlie says: "They say everybody has a double, well I think I've found mine."

Elliott's 'take it or leave it' threat

SEVERAL League clubs have been following developments at Darlington involving their talented young strikers Alan Walsh and John Stalker.

Their contracts expired at the end of last season after they scored a total of 40 goals for the Fourth Division club.

Darlington boss Billy Elliott offered them new contracts which they haven't signed.

Elliott took a hard line, telling them: "Take it or leave it", and it could be that one or both of the players could be leaving.

Meanwhile, Elliott has made one summer signing, defender Kenny Mitchell who was given a free transfer by Newcastle.

Wolves player gets nearly £1,000 a week

ONE person on the payroll at Wolves earned between £45,000 and £50,000, the First Division club's balance sheet reveals.

No name accompanies the figure but it is fairly certain that that sum was pocketed by Wolves' Scottish international striker Andy Gray.

If so, it makes Gray one of the wealthiest footballers in the country.

Two on the Molineux payroll earned between £30,000-£35,000; one between £25,000-£30,000, and eight others picked up salaries of between £20,000-£25,000. More than £700,000 was paid in wages.

Surprisingly, Wolves made a net profit of £44,375, the balance sheet creeping into the black only through the transfer of Dave Thomas to Vancouver Whitecaps.

Turnstile receipts for League matches were £825,000. Travelling and hotel costs rose to £168,450. Three seasons ago the figure for those items was a little over £52,000.

Hereford star?

STRUGGLING Fourth Division side Hereford appear to have an outstanding addition to their ranks in Bristol born Sean Lane.

Sean, equally at home as a midfielder or an out-and-out winger, won England schoolboy and county youth honours. He has also won honours in Herefordshire athletic circles.

Having played for England boys at Wembley, his ambition now is to make the full national team.

Supermac's fan

BURNLEY'S young centre-forward Bill Wright counts Malcolm Macdonald as the player who was tops with him.

It was while Supermac was with Newcastle that the 18-year-old Wright became most attached to him.

But then that figures. Wright was born at Corbridge, 17 miles from Newcastle, and played for Wallsend Boys'.

★ Forfar Athletic have paid more than £10,000 — a record for the Angus side — to Stenhousemuir for striker Steve Hancock who was a top scorer in the Scottish Second Division last season. Hancock went to Stenhousemuir from Meadowbank Thistle and earlier had spells with Celtic, Sheffield Wednesday and Hearts.

Rolland's comeback

COWDENBEATH manager Andy Rolland is having second thoughts about retiring. At the end of last season the former Dundee United full-back officially retired to concentrate fully on the managerial side at Central Park. But Cowdenbeath coach Tommy Traynor has almost talked his boss into having one last season age the age of 38.



● Pretty Beverley Higgins has enjoyed a continental holiday this summer on the strength of winning the national "Miss Football Supporter" title held at Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire. Beverley, an ardent Wrexham fan, beat off the challenge of five other finalists to clinch the award.

CLIVE ALLEN'S SMILING AGAIN

QUEENS PARK RANGERS are 7-1 to win promotion to the First Division, second favourites behind Leicester City.

Their Omniturf pitch will almost certainly ensure a strong home record, with opponents playing on the surface for the first time, while Rangers will be used to the 'plastic grass'.

They also have Clive Allen back in the firing line and the return of the England Under-21 striker following his £2.4m transfer journey around London could be the final piece in the promotion jigsaw.

Rangers' fans will be expecting their former goal ace to produce the goods again, but he says: "The only target I, or anyone at the club has, is promotion. In pre-season I made as many goals as I scored, which was most pleasing."

"I'm glad to be back, though. The pattern of play and style of the team is very much the same. It's almost as if I'd never been away."

"The experiences of the past year are all behind me now. I just want to settle in and enjoy my football again. This won't be hard. We have such a strong side."

Briefly

● Drogheda United manager Ray Treacy has persuaded Stephen Craig to make a comeback. Craig had left Home Farm last year to concentrate on rugby.

● Former Eire international Mick Leech is the new assistant manager of Dundalk. Leech was a star with Shamrock Rovers in the 60's and later served with Waterford, Bohemians, Drogheda, Shelbourne and St. Patrick's Athletic in quick succession.

● Berwick Rangers will kick off their centenary celebrations with a game against Leicester City at Shielfield Park on Monday, October 12. For Leicester manager Jock Wallace it will be a return to the ground where he masterminded Berwick's famous Scottish Cup victory over Glasgow Rangers in 1967. He was in goal the day Berwick won 1-0.

● A new-look Sunderland this season. The Roker club have swapped their familiar red and white stripes for a shirt that is largely white with thin red lines. It's a switch that hasn't gone down too well with some supporters.

● Chesterfield have appointed Trevor Denton as editor of its match day magazine. Mr. Denton, a long standing supporter of the club, is Group Publicity Manager of the Twil Group, the largest wire producing organisation in the U.K.

CHARLTON Athletic have completed the first two stages of a major project to give their ground an all-seater stadium. A total of 7,800 seats have been installed in the club's redeveloped North and South stands. The seats were supplied in a special red to match the club's official colours.

Thanks Arsenal

STEVE WOOD, the 18-year-old Reading centre-half, was allowed to leave Arsenal, but he bears no malice about it.

The Bracknell-born youngster says: "I was a schoolboy at Arsenal for two years and that experience helped me very much. I learned a lot. They are a great club and so, too, are Reading."

Wood has won schoolboy honours at South of England and county level.

● Last year young Dubliner Gary Howlett turned down the chance to join Manchester United and signed for Coventry City instead. Now with the managerial changes at Old Trafford, Gary finds himself serving under Dave Sexton at Highfield Road.

● Clyde and Ayr United have brought off a rapid series of transfer deals.

First Clyde skipper Brian Ahern was sold to Ayr for £40,000 with midfield players Billy McColl and Robert Reilly moving North as part of the package. Then Ayr striker Derek McCutcheon was bought by the Glasgow club for £10,000 and finally 'Bully-Wee' midfielder Jimmy Kean was acquired by the Somerset Park men for a further £40,000.

● Middlesbrough's new £1m. sports complex impressed members of the Association of football Statisticians on a recent sponsored tour. Secretary Ray Spiller described the facilities as "The best in the North-East".

● QUOTE . . . from West Ham manager John Lyall: "Aston Villa and Ipswich Town must start the new season as favourites. However, I have a feeling that 1981/82 will see success for teams who place the emphasis on attacking football, which is why I'm looking to Spurs, Southampton and West Brom to do something. Hopefully, we'll be in there with a shout, too."

Champions Celtic — Cup Kings Rangers...again!



Danny McGrain and Charlie Nicholas celebrate Celtic's Championship success.

Final League Tables 1980-81

SCOTTISH PREMIER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	36	12	3	3	47	18	14	1	3	37	19	56
Aberdeen	36	11	4	3	39	16	8	7	3	22	10	49
Rangers	36	12	3	2	33	10	4	9	5	27	22	44
St Mirren	36	9	6	3	28	20	9	2	7	28	27	44
Dundee U	36	8	5	5	24	24	9	4	5	32	19	43
Partick	36	6	6	6	17	17	4	4	10	16	31	30
Airdrie	36	6	5	7	19	25	4	4	10	17	30	29
Morton	36	7	2	9	24	28	3	6	9	12	30	28
Kilmarnock	36	3	5	10	14	31	2	4	12	9	34	19
Hearts	36	3	4	11	10	27	3	2	13	17	44	18

SCOTTISH FIRST

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hibs	39	14	4	2	38	9	10	5	4	29	15	57
Dundee	39	14	4	2	42	18	8	4	7	22	22	52
St Johnst	39	12	3	5	31	21	8	8	3	33	24	51
Raith	39	11	7	1	26	11	9	3	8	23	21	50
Mthwll	39	14	5	1	41	20	5	6	8	24	31	49
Ayr U	39	11	5	3	34	17	6	8	8	25	25	45
Hamilton	39	9	5	6	39	27	6	2	11	22	30	37
Dumbarton	39	8	5	6	23	22	5	6	9	26	28	37
Falkirk	39	7	4	8	24	29	6	4	10	15	23	34
Clydebank	39	8	6	5	31	25	2	7	11	17	34	33
E Stirling	39	4	10	6	20	24	2	7	10	21	32	29
Dunfermline	39	6	3	11	17	28	4	4	11	24	30	27
Stirling A	39	4	6	9	13	21	2	5	13	5	27	23
Berwick	39	5	6	8	18	27	0	6	14	13	55	22

SCOTTISH SECOND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Queens P	39	9	9	2	30	19	7	9	3	32	24	50
Q of S	39	7	8	4	31	29	9	6	5	35	24	46
Cwdnbtth	29	12	3	4	35	20	6	6	8	28	28	45
Brachin	39	10	7	3	29	18	5	7	7	23	28	44
Forfar	39	9	3	7	34	32	8	6	6	29	25	43
Alloa	39	10	4	6	29	25	5	8	6	32	29	42
Montrose	39	9	4	6	31	24	7	4	9	35	31	40
Clyde	39	10	6	4	45	31	4	6	9	33	32	40
Arbroath	39	3	9	8	20	29	10	3	6	28	35	38
Stranraer	39	4	7	8	27	32	9	4	7	36	26	37
E Fife	39	6	9	4	21	21	4	6	10	23	32	35
Albion	39	9	3	8	37	41	4	6	9	22	31	35
Midwbank	39	6	2	11	17	35	5	10	15	25	29	29
Stranraer	39	4	5	11	20	41	3	3	13	16	42	22

KING SOCCER rules again with the kick-off to a new League season in Scotland, and with the fanfare start there comes the usual crop of questions.

Who will win the Premier Division crown? Can Celtic hold on to the Championship? Will Rangers progress from last season's Scottish Cup triumph? Will Dundee United win the League Cup for the third successive year? It's all part of football. It's the great guessing game.

SHOOT previews the Scottish scene in an effort to provide some of the answers.

WE will predict straight away that Celtic will be the Top Ten Champions for the second successive year and the fourth time in six years.

Rangers, Aberdeen and Dundee United will undoubtedly disagree vehemently with that prediction, but please afford us the platform to give the reasons behind our thinking.

Celtic were a good team last season who showed magnificent resource and character in overcoming a bad stutter during the programme.

But they came through the hard times and grew up together as a team. Pat Bonner, Mark Reid, John Weir and Charlie Nicholas were all playing in their first full season in the top team.

This season they will be even better players for that experience. The established players will also be progressing.

Tommy Burns earned his first

full cap in the British Championship match against Northern Ireland which the Scots won 2-0 at Hampden and there is little doubt that there are more honours around the corner for this cultured left sided player. His influence will be vital this time out.

Davie Provan, too, will be a better player. He grew up in international stature last season and he is one of the truly gifted players on the Scottish scene.

Danny McGrain, Roy Aitken and Frank McGarvey have also had top international experience and they will also be key men.

The bargain £45,000 signing of Willie Garner from Aberdeen will help steady the defence and the rivalry for central defensive places will be welcome.

Celtic are not the finished article, but they are getting there under the skillful promptings of manager Billy McNeill and his assistant John Clark.



"The future of this club is ensured by the young players who come through," says McNeill. "They are the lifeblood of Celtic."

"I'm not in the market for competing at ludicrous transfer levels. We prefer to coach a player through the ranks until he is ready to play his part."

"Then he is brought up in the tradition of the club and he knows exactly what is expected of him. I get excited when I watch some of our young players in action."

"That sort of competition makes certain that none of the established players get stale... It means everyone is on his toes all the time and that can't be bad for Celtic."

Last season Celtic won the Premier crown unhampered by European duties after rather unluckily going out to Rumanian side Politehnica in the First Round of the Cup-Winners' Cup on the away goals rule.

This time they face Juventus in the First Round of the European Cup and it's a difficult task for the Parkhead men. If they do go out it will leave them free to concentrate

on the domestic scene once again. However, Celtic are such a proud and competitive club they want to be involved in every trophy right to the very last kick.

Old Firm rivals Rangers are hardly likely to step aside and watch Celtic waltz off with the silverware, and Ibrox manager John Greig will be looking for more consistency from his side.

"If we can get better results away from home we will make the expected progress," says Greig.

"In fact, our form outside Ibrox last season was nothing short of diabolical and the players know my feelings on this."

Greig has again strengthened his side with the £95,000 purchase of utility player John McClelland, the Northern Ireland international from Mansfield, and he admits he is looking for another two players before he is satisfied with his squad.

Rangers will improve upon last season's somewhat erratic form, but whether or not it is substantial enough to see them being crowned Kings of Scotland for the first time in four years remains to

aggregate in the League Cup Semi-Final and 3-2 in the Scottish Cup Semi-Final replay.

There is little doubt that Jim McLean's talented terrors from Tannadice have a lot to offer and can rise to the occasion when needed, but we doubt if they have the staying power of Celtic.

St. Mirren have replaced Peter Weir with Aberdeen's Ian Scanlon and on his day he can be a mesmerising wizard on the left touch-line. Tony Fitzpatrick, too, has returned after his unhappy spell with Bristol City.

Scanlon and Fitzpatrick plus the likes of Billy Thomson, Jackie Copland, Billy Stark, Jimmy Bone and Billy Abercromby should be the nucleus of a good, entertaining, hard working side, but, again, it's difficult to see a top honour going their way.

That leaves a scramble among Morton, Partick Thistle, Airdrie,

several powerful sides who will battle bravely to stay at the top of the ladder. The relegated duo of Kilmarnock and Hearts have no intention whatsoever of staying out of the limelight and we would expect a courageous challenge from them in the months that lie ahead.

St. Johnstone were pipped by one point last time out and they will undoubtedly be a better side for that experience. Raith, Motherwell, Ayr United and Hamilton, too, should all make encouraging progress.

Dunfermline, with Pat Stanton leading them, could be the dark horse in this Division. Stanton has worked long and hard during the pre-season strengthening his side.

Athletic

He has steadied his leaky defence with the signing of goal-keeper George Young, surprisingly freed by Rangers, and the tall, athletic former Stirling Albion star will be vital to their hopes.

Relegation candidates? Newly-promoted Queen's Park and Queen of the South could feel the heat and one of them — possibly the Palmerston team — could slip back into the bottom Division.

East Stirling, having lost their manager Billy Lamont to Dumbarton during the close season, could be the other team to slide out of the First.

And what about Division Two? Stirling Albion were relegated last season and, really, they are a far better team than that form suggests.

We think they will bounce back in one go, possibly taking Andy Rolland's ambitious Cowdenbeath with them.

Cup winners Rangers will be looking to take Celtic's title this season.



Aberdeen's Mark McGhee (left) will be under a lot of pressure to score regularly for his side. Airdrie (white strip, right) may need a reorganisation of the League to save their place in the top Scottish Division. Kilmarnock (hoops, above) and Dunfermline will both challenge for promotion.



be seen. SHOOT'S tip is that they could do well in Europe and win something, possibly the Scottish Cup again.

Aberdeen are a bit of an enigma. Manager Alex Ferguson splashed out over £300,000 to bring St. Mirren's outside-left Peter Weir to Pittodrie and he says: "Now I feel we have the right balance. Gordon Strachan can give us width on the right with Peter on the left."

Famous

We are not arguing with fiery Fergie, but we are wondering who will score the goals that will bring victory. Neither Strachan nor Weir will ever be famous for their goal-scoring and the onus will fall again on Mark McGhee, Walker McCall or Andy Harrow.

McGhee was the most successful of that trio last term, but even he hit a lapse and the goalscoring touch dried-up. A repeat and Aberdeen will be in trouble.

Dundee United have been threatening to crash the League barrier for the past four or five years, but have yet to match their potential and promise with the consistency that is essential.

They were never remotely close to Celtic last season in the League. Strangely they lost all their League games to the Parkhead men home and away, but beat them 4-1 on

Hibs and Dundee to stay clear of the trap door that would drop them into the First Division.

Morton and Thistle have been over the course before and we think they have enough to stay up. Hibs, guided by Bertie Auld, should also do enough to stay away from the hangman's noose.

That leaves Dundee and Airdrie to tumble out of the Top Ten, but we will take another look into the crystal ball and predict they will be saved by League reconstruction at the end of the season!

We expect the League to be reorganised after the present season. If the drop in attendances is not arrested something drastic must be done and that probably means an extension to the Top Ten to possibly 12 or 14 clubs. Remember, we told you first!

In the First Division there are

Beware, too, the other relegated team Berwick Rangers. Frank Connors has completely reshaped the team and they will also challenge all the way for a place upstairs.

So, that's Celtic for the Premier Division title and Rangers to retain their Scottish Cup as well as making a splash in Europe. We take Aberdeen to loosen Dundee United's grip on the League Cup and reconstruction will save Airdrie and Dundee from the axe into the First Division.

Hearts and Kilmarnock look good enough to stay clear of the pack in the First Division with Queen of the South and East Stirling toiling along at the bottom. We're taking Stirling Albion to win the Second Division title with either Cowdenbeath or Berwick Rangers claiming second spot.

SHOOT!

TEAMS-UP WITH

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The Adidas Golden Shoe awards, presented every year to the leading goalscorers in each of the four Football League Divisions, are now among the most coveted in the game... a top target for strikers.

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We are proud to be associated with Adidas and this prestigious award.

SHOOT will keep you up-to-date with this season's Golden Shoe contenders by publishing a regular goalscorers' table.

Last season's winner was Spurs and Scotland striker Steve Archibald (left), who received his award at a special luncheon in London.

"The Golden Shoe was an unbelievable climax to a fantastic season," said Steve. "I never dreamed I'd end my first season at White Hart Lane with an F.A. Cup winner's medal and a trophy for being the First Division's top goalscorer."

"I'd set myself a target of 20 goals when I joined Spurs so I was obviously delighted with my overall total of 25."

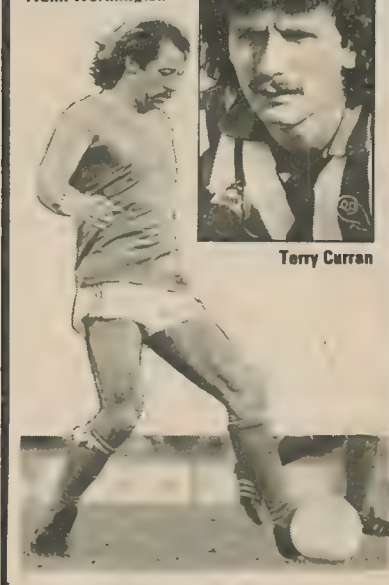
"One Golden Shoe is tremendous," said Steve. "Now I'm determined to make it a pair."

The other award winners last season were: Second Division — David Cross (West Ham — 27 goals). Third Division Tony Kellow (Exeter City — 32 goals). Fourth Division Robbie Cooke (Peterborough — 29 goals).



West Ham's David Cross nets at Cambridge last season.

Frank Worthington



Terry Curran

Previous Golden Shoe winners

1978

First Div. — Bob Latchford (Everton)
Second Div. — Bob Hatton (Blackpool)
Third Div. — Alex Bruce (Preston)
Fourth Div. — Steve Phillips (Brentford)

1979

First Div. — Frank Worthington (Bolton)
Second Div. — Bryan Robson (West Ham)
Third Div. — Ross Jenkins (Watford)
Fourth Div. — John Dugworth (Aldershot)

1980

First Div. — Phil Boyer (Southampton)
Second Div. — Clive Allen (Q.P.R.)
Third Div. — Terry Curran (Sheff. Wed.)
Fourth Div. — Colin Garwood (Aldershot)

WREXHAM'S sharpshooting Dixie McNeil lays down three golden rules for his team's success in 1981-82.

He says: "We mustn't throw games away in the closing minutes, we have to win more often at home, and we must show a good return of points from our opening ten matches."

"It isn't difficult to look back and realise why we finished in the bottom half of the Second Division last season."

"On at least half a dozen occasions I can remember us conceding vital goals late on in the game."

"Then there was the fact that we failed to win as many matches at home as we won away."

DIXIE'S RULES FOR WREXHAM

Wrexham's failure to impress at the Racecourse Ground last term is something Dixie attributes to match-day nerves — suffered not by the players but by the fans!

He explains: "During a game I could feel the apprehension of the supporters spreading like a wave on to the field, making the Wrexham players over-anxious."

"Any mistakes we made were magnified at home in contrast to those we made on away grounds, which were soon forgotten."

"This is why I'm looking forward to us enjoying a good start in 1981-82, so that the fans and the team at the Racecourse Ground will gain in confidence. If that happens we'll be higher in the table than we were last season."

For McNeil, there will be significant changes this season in his off-field life at Wrexham.

"Now that Dai Davies has gone to Swansea I've lost a good friend. Apart from being a top-class 'keeper, Dai was the sort of fellow you could enjoy talking to — I know that he will do as well for his new club as he did for us," Dixie says.

"And with Mel Sutton being promoted from player-coach to manager, I don't know whether or not I will still be able to go out and have a drink with him! Also, of course, as our new boss, he may decide to concentrate entirely on management and hang up his boots."

McNeil's knowledge of Sutton

as a player-coach is sufficient for Dixie to entertain hopes about Wrexham making a definite bid to figure among the Division Two leaders, though he expects the competition to be tough.

"Mel is acquainted well enough with our players to be able to get the best out of them. But I reckon the front runners for promotion could be the clubs who were relegated — Palace, Leicester and Norwich."

"And I wouldn't rule out Newcastle United. They have only to manage a good result or two and those magnificent Geordie fans will be right behind them, doing their best to cheer their team into the First Division."

'Predict'

"As for Wrexham, I can't go out on a limb and predict this is going to be our promotion season."

"Yet we are capable of extending the best teams in our Division, and our away record last season bore favourable comparison with the three promoted clubs."

"Wrexham will be aiming for a place in the top half-dozen, and as we'll need plenty of goals to achieve this, I'll be out to contribute my share."

"My enthusiasm for finding the net is as strong as ever, and my feet were itching for some shooting practice at the end of the Summer — all I ask of myself is that I'm on target regularly between now and next May."



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YOUR MOST EXCITING PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

KENNY DALGLISH was shocked when told he had been voted SHOOT's Most Exciting Player of the Year in the English League for the third season in succession. "The last two times I've won I was delighted," he said. "But I was stunned this time because I did not feel I had a particularly good season." Kenny received his trophy from Liverpool boss Bob Paisley and skipper Phil Thompson (above). Celtic's **CHARLIE NICHOLAS** was voted top player in Scotland by SHOOT readers. "Last season was a special one for me because it was my first full term in the senior side. But to win SHOOT's award was a very proud moment. I have always read the magazine," he said after receiving his award from Celtic captain Danny McGrain (right).



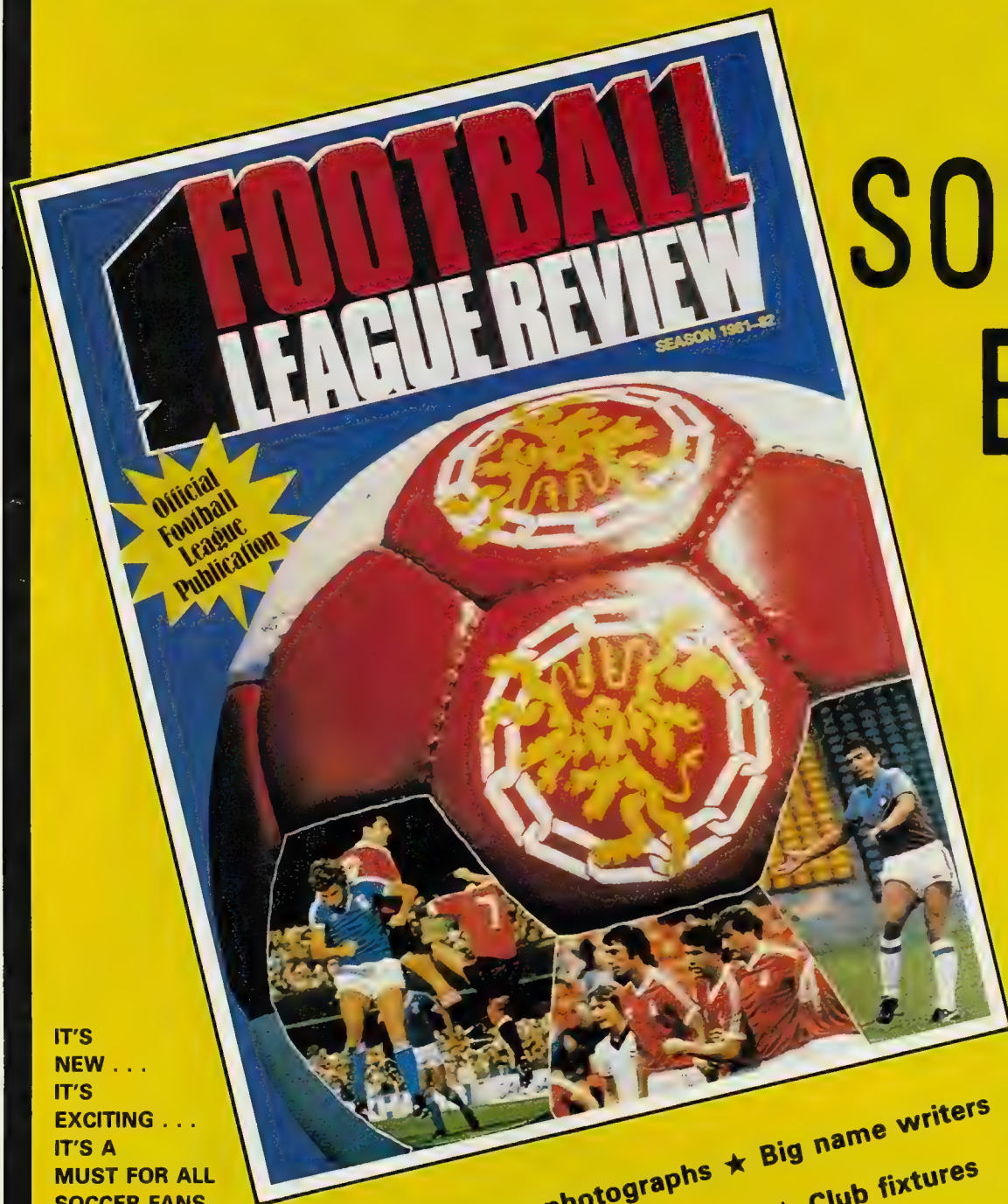
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PRICE

The West Brom and England star kicks off the first of his regular columns.

I SHOULD be starting 1981-82 as Britain's most expensive signing, breaking Andy Gray's record. A club — and you don't have to be Mastermind to guess which one — offered West Brom £1.5 million. Add on all the levies and you wouldn't have much change out of two million.

West Brom turned this down, though, so heaven knows how much they want for me. The papers have been mentioning £2m, so perhaps that's the figure they have in mind.

I told Ronnie Allen how disappointed I was that the club didn't accept the offer. My hands are tied. All I can do is to wait . . . and hope.

Ambition

Despite what you may have read, my reason for wanting away is NOT financial. My main concern is ambition — and I don't see the club's ambitions matching mine.

I've gone as far as I can go with West Brom. I feel the time is right to move on to a bigger club.

I'm ambitious. I want to win honours. I've broken into the England team and I want to help them win the World Cup. I aim to improve on my form of last season.

It all came to a head and I asked West Brom for a transfer. They told me I would have to see out the remainder of my current contract,

Cup qualifying ties. Mind you, you're never sure of a place with England. Despite the nice things that have been said about me, I don't regard myself as an automatic choice.

I could be injured in the first game of the season and struggle to get back in the team. Nobody gets in just because he's fit.

I've set myself a standard, which I now want to better. In this respect

"Kevin Keegan is a fine example at international level for me. I would like to improve as he has done."



like there was after our victory in Budapest and that was when West Brom won promotion to the First Division.

It's difficult to put into words exactly how we all felt, but it was probably as near as you can get to the ultimate satisfaction in football.

Missed out

The World Cup means everything to me. Having missed out on the European Championship I aim to play so well that Ron Greenwood can't leave me out of any World Cup squads from now.

I'm looking forward to a repeat of the Budapest celebrations after we've beaten Hungary at Wembley . . . but that's a long way off.

Right now it's our game against Manchester City at Maine Road that really matters and no Albion player will be more eager to shine than Steve Mackenzie, who joined us from the F.A. Cup runners-up just a couple of weeks ago.

He'll be linking up with another City old boy, Gary Owen, in our four-man midfield with Remi Moses and myself. We lost 2-1 in the corresponding fixture last season, with yours truly scoring our goal, so we'll be looking for a reversal this time. Join me again in a fortnight,

Steve Mackenzie

'I SHOULD HAVE BROKEN THE TRANSFER RECORD'

which I may yet do.

They also offered me a new, improved five-year contract, which I can sign at any time. I shan't be doing so, however.

I'm in no man's land at the moment. The boss has said he will listen to offers, but if they don't consider £1.5 million enough then I may as well resign myself to staying.

What I must do is put all of this business at the back of my mind. Forget about it and get on with playing football.

This time last year England had returned from a disappointing European Championship. Glenn Hoddle was picked ahead of me for the last place in the squad.

Now, I'm the only player to have appeared in all of England's World

Kevin Keegan is a fine example.

When Kevin broke through he did well. Then, he became even better — and then went on to surpass even that. I'd like to think I can do this, too.

I happen to think we'll surprise a few people if we qualify for the World Cup Finals. I say 'if' because all the players are aware that there is still a long way to go.

Fresh

The game in Norway comes early in the season, but as the victory in Hungary is still quite fresh in our minds perhaps that's not a bad thing.

Only once have I been in a dressing-room with an atmosphere



It's the moment of truth for this trio of strikers. They have arrived at the crossroads of their careers. They each cost £1 million or more and have much to prove to justify the huge sums their clubs paid to capture their services.

The 1981-82 season is something of a make or break time for Garry Birtles, Andy Gray and Ian Wallace. Are they worth £1 million to Manchester United, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Nottingham Forest or are they over-rated, over-priced and destined never to score the goals their respective managers demanded after risking so much money?

Birtles failed to score a single League goal after signing for United in the autumn of 1980, breaking his duck only in United's F.A. Cup victory at Brighton?

Andy Gray's career, blighted by injury, has reached a critical stage also. He desperately needs a goal glut to silence critics who question the huge salary he receives from Wolves. He scored only 11 goals for the Molineux club last season.

Brian Clough thought Ian Wal-

lace would make an ideal partner for Trevor Francis in a £2 million strike force. His hopes have not materialised. Wallace, formerly of Coventry, scored only 13 League and Cup goals last season. And now Clough has signed Justin Fashanu from Norwich, more pressure will be on Wallace.

All three have acceptable excuses for not playing well. Birtles never fitted into the attacking formula Dave Sexton masterminded; Gray blames injury and loss of form in a relegation threatened team; Wallace has not had time to develop a proper understanding with Francis.

They face an anxious few weeks, trusting that their brilliant goal-scoring talents will re-emerge to make the new season memorable and force the fans to forget they each cost a cool £1 million.

All we are saying is...

GIVE US A GOAL



FAR LEFT . . . Garry Birtles (right) is still looking for his first League goal in a Manchester-United shirt.
TOP . . . Brian Clough will demand more goals from Ian Wallace (light strip). **LEFT** . . . Value for money? Andy Gray has not yet fulfilled expectations at Wolves.

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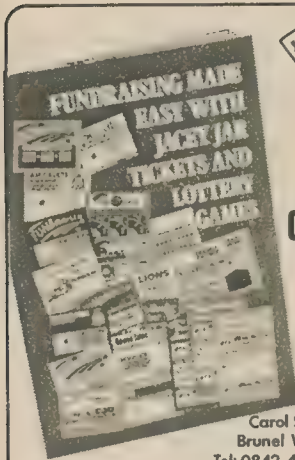
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**Chris
Davies
meets...**

STEVE ARCHIBALD has a simple
description of himself. "I'm a
winner," says the Spurs and
Scotland striker. "I was top scorer
in my first season with Aberdeen,
beat that total the next year, came
down to England and won an F.A.
Cup winners' medal." Because

he's a quiet character and doesn't score flashy goals,
Archibald's achievements haven't been properly
acknowledged by a soccer public which too often takes
to lesser players who flatter to deceive. But if the Spurs
man keeps up his scoring record, fans will surely have
to admit that Archibald is the best striker in Britain.

SCORING SO FOR WINNER ARCHIBALD

It annoys Steve Archibald a little when people
ask him why he's done so well in English
football. The answer, which he wouldn't say, is
that he is a very good player and good players
will always do well. One person not surprised
by the player's success is Archibald himself.

As he looked back on a season where he won
the Adidas Golden Shoe for being the First
Division's top scorer, he said: "I couldn't ever
imagine myself being disappointed with 25
goals, but in the end I was.

"If someone had said to me last August I'd
score that many I'd have taken them. I
shouldn't be upset with my total. Yet I could
still have scored more.

"I know every striker can say this and no one
can ever score from every chance that comes
his way. It's just that things were going so well
at one stage that I feel I could have had another
ten or 12 goals."

The Spurs star gives away no secrets when
he talks about the reason for his goal tally.

"I don't score goals from a long distance.

If your two main strikers can score 40 between
them you're in business."

Archibald may be a winner, but he was a little
surprised at the attitude of one or two Spurs
players when he arrived in England.

"They'd say that 'we may get a draw at
Anfield', which I found unbelievable. I've never
thought like that in my life.

"Whoever I'm playing for and whoever the
opposition, I've always believed my side could
win, no matter what. I have total confidence
and it isn't just a bluff.

"A team can never win the title with that
outlook, although I stress it was just a couple of
players. But that's enough.

"Our F.A. Cup victory has changed all that
it's given us a belief in ourselves... more
confidence to think we're as good as anyone."

Spurs are probably as entertaining as
anyone, but as good... ? Despite their exciting
victory in the F.A. Cup Final replay, they still
seem to lack the steel and consistency it takes
to be Champions.



Archibald nets one of his
most crucial goals of last
season — against Wolves
in the F.A. Cup
Semi-Final draw at
Hillsborough last April.

Most of them are 'little' goals from close in
rebounds, knock-downs or sticking a leg out at
the right time.

"It's all a question of sharpness. If I'm sharper
than the defender then there's nothing he can
do about it. I seem to have that vital half a yard
when it matters.

"You can't coach that into a player or even
achieve it by extra training. It's either there or it
isn't.

"It's just natural. My reactions are automatic,
not planned. I follow a shot through as a matter
of habit and try to think ahead.

"I realise I've set a high standard for myself. I
always have, though.

"I scored around 21 or 22 goals in my first full
season with Aberdeen and grabbed a few more
next time round. My 25 goals last season with
Spurs gives me something to aim at.

"Before the start of every season I set myself
a target of 20 goals. That's realistic for a striker.

"It's important that we build on that
Wembley triumph," says Archibald. "The
manager has not only kept the team together,
but the squad has been strengthened.

"We're a very attack-minded team. We have
no defensive midfielder, although we must
concede fewer goals. Sometimes the best form
of defence is attack, but a side can't go forward
without covering properly at the back.

"I love playing for Spurs. I can't believe I
could play in any other team and be surrounded
by such an array of talent.

"It was important that Glenn Hoddle
re-signed. He's a Spurs man
through-and-through. The club means a lot to
him. Spurs are his life.

"Glenn is like oxygen to me, he supplies me
with so much ammunition it makes my job a lot
easier. Steve Perryman plays behind him on the
right hand side and Steve knows that if he's in
trouble Glenn will be there to help him out. In

fact, Steve tries to give the ball to Glenn even if he isn't in trouble because Glenn will more often than not do something constructive.

"If the team can stay together for another year or two, we shan't be far off being a Championship team."

Archibald has another target this season: a place in Scotland's World Cup squad. Scotland, of all the Home teams, have probably the best chance of qualifying, although he warns:

"Sweden's win over Portugal has thrown the group wide open. Sweden seemed out of it at one time, but they're back in the reckoning."

"If we beat them at Hampden in early September we should reach the Finals. The other spot would then be between Portugal and Northern Ireland."

Scotland's team is still not settled. Manager Jock Stein has yet to find the right blend, especially up front where he has almost too many players to choose from... Kenny Dalglish, Joe Jordan, Andy Gray, John

NATURAL

Robertson, Paul Sturrock and Archibald.

"I feel sorry for the manager. It isn't easy for two front players to hit it off immediately. Yet if they don't, the boss is under pressure from the supporters and Press to change the side."

"Players need a run together to strike up a partnership. Time is in short supply in football, though."

"International soccer is a big jump from the First Division. At League level teams have only three or four outstanding players, usually, and you have to exploit the more mediocre ones."

"Playing for Scotland I've noticed there are hardly any 'weak' players, which makes it that much harder."

One player Archibald admires is his rival for one of the striker's positions, Andy Gray.

"I never realised how good Andy is. He has more control than people give him credit for, while in the air he's the best I've ever seen."

"In the F.A. Cup Semi-Final against Wolves at Hillsborough Andy was a constant danger."

"We were sitting in the Highbury dressing-room before the replay when it was announced he wouldn't be playing."

"It was like a huge weight being lifted from our shoulders. Ossie Ardiles said: 'There's no way they can beat us now.' Andy's absence gave us tremendous confidence."

Stein may not have found his ideal strike-force yet, but Archibald's goals make it very difficult for the Big Man to leave out the Spurs man.

Archibald aims to go to Spain as the First Division's top scorer again — and you wouldn't get very good odds against that.



Glenn Hoddle (above left) is vital to Tottenham's Championship hopes. Andy Gray (above, dark shirt), whom Archibald reckons to be a vastly underrated player for Scotland.

22

GOAL-LINES

Send your letters to STEVE CARTER, GOAL-LINES, SHOOT!,

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Transfer scandal

I HAVE been a serious follower of Arsenal for five years and I have experienced the joys and despairs that come with football.

But another side to the game, apart from the matches, gives me the need to write to you. This is of course the transfer scandal.

Last year Arsenal and probably the Football League lost its best player, Liam Brady, to Italy for a sum far below his real value.

Freedom of Contract has meant that players can almost choose where they want to go, which proves costly to the original club and financial security to the player.

This aspect of the game is destroying football and has to be controlled.

NIGEL PEDLEY,
HAYES.

● Arsenal have suffered badly, although with Freedom of Contract all clubs are the losers and players the winners.

Skill, not stamina

I ENJOYED your recent article on Charlie George, the genius England lost. The same could have been written about Alan Hudson and Peter Osgood, two other individualists whose talent was never fulfilled.

One of the reasons ball-players like these have disappeared out of the English game is because too much emphasis is placed on work-rate and stamina.

Look at the current England team. The main stars are Keegan and Robson, yet all they do is play steady, unadventurous football, and work hard.

Youngsters see them getting all the

credit, and instead of practising with a ball, they start exercising to improve their stamina.

C. LAWRENCE,
GREENWICH.

● I wish England had nine more "steady, hard-working and unadventurous" players like Keegan and Robson. They'd have qualified for the World Cup by now.



Hoddle for Brooking

BEING a West Ham supporter I appreciate good football and stylish, but reliable players such as Trevor Brooking.

But now, it is fair to say that Trevor's years as an international are numbered, so England need a midfield player who is world-class and a match winner, like Glenn Hoddle.

We all admired the brilliant Brazilian free-kick skills of Junior and Zico on their recent European tour, which proved very effective.

Hoddle can bend, swerve and pass a ball as well as any player in Europe.

Ron Greenwood must realise that Glenn Hoddle is now 23 and must be given a chance to prove himself.

DAVID CROAD,
CHELTENHAM.

● The experienced players will have the task of getting England to the World Cup Finals. Then, Hoddle (above) may get his chance. But will it be too late?

SHOOT so different

THANK goodness for SHOOT with its wide coverage of facts, magical photography and stirring articles.

So different from so many of the dreary daily soccer columns who almost since the end of last season have harped on with monotony on the future of players like Hoddle, Stapleton, O'Leary, Watson and more recently Barnes.

JIM COOK,
BRANDON.

● We have lots of surprises and new ideas to make 1981/82 even brighter.

Stop changing!

STOP CHANGING — That's my message to the football clubs who change their kit every season.

Changing their kit may be profitable for the club, but the fans who like to wear replicas end up with a raw deal, because more often than not the new kits cost more.

All I can say is, give the fans a chance. STUART WALKER,
LEEDS.

● Football kits, like everything else in the country, cost more now. They're all part of the business of soccer.

Pen Pal

I'm a 16-year-old 'devil' and would like to correspond with supporters of Manchester United and England.

D. J. BARTIS,
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Long-serving Busby

As managers come and go so often nowadays, can you tell me who has kept his job the longest in English football since the last War?

PAUL PHILLIPS,
ENFIELD

● Must be Sir Matt Busby, Paul. Then plain Mr. Busby, he was appointed to the post of Manchester United manager on 18th February 1945, and formally took over some months later on his Army demob after wartime service. He remained as manager (in latter years under the title of general manager) until June 1971 when he was appointed a director of the club. Now, of course, he's still there — as President.

Scoring Record

What's the most number of consecutive Football League games in which a player has scored?

M. NOORMOHAMED,
TANZANIA

● Sixteen is the best — and, as you'll probably guess in these days of very tight defensive tactics, it didn't take place all that recently!

Leicester's Arthur Chandler was the 16-goal hero, and he achieved his feat in the Second Division in the 1924-25 season.

Certainly Chandler was quite a striker. Between 1923 and 1935, he notched a club-record 262 League goals for Leicester — and he's one of the mere 22 players who've scored six goals in a game (v. Portsmouth in October 1928) since the Football League was started in 1888.

SHORT PASSES

● Laurie Cunningham, now with Real Madrid, joined West Bromwich from Orient in March, 1977.
(NANCY KUNDOR, East Malaysia)

● England have only played Malta twice in full internationals — both in the European Championship in 1971 — winning 5-0 at Wembley, and 1-0 in Valletta.

(ROBERT MICALLEF, Malta)

● John Chidozie was born in Qwerri, Nigeria.

(HENRY MWEWA, Zambia)

● Before moving to SV Hamburg, and now Southampton, Kevin Keegan scored 18 goals in 124 League games for Scunthorpe, and 68 in 230 for Liverpool.

(DAVID TIERNAN, Eire)

● West Bromwich have won the F.A. Cup five times (1888, 1892, 1931, 1954, and 1968), and been beaten finalists another five (1886, 1887, 1895, 1912, and 1935).

(PETER JONES, Milton Keynes)

Short Passes are replies to readers' letters.



This week's Star Letter comes from A. Morcombe of Glasgow, who wins our Special Prize of £10. He writes:

FOREIGN SUCCESS FOR ENGLISH CLUBS

ENGLISHMEN who continually complain about their national side's endeavours and boast of their League club's successes in Europe severely irritate me.

They wonder why the clubs are doing so well abroad while the national side remains stagnant.

Some 'foreigners' among the successful clubs were:

Ipswich Town	Nottm Forest	Liverpool
F. Thijssen — Holland	K. Burns — Scotland	A. Hansen — Scotland
A. Muhren — Holland	F. Gray — Scotland	G. Souness — Scotland
J. Wark — Scotland	J. McGovern — Scotland	K. Dalglish — Scotland
A. Brazil — Scotland	J. Robertson — Scotland	I. Rush — Wales
G. Burley — Scotland	I. Wallace — Scotland	S. Heighway — Eire
K. O'Callaghan — Eire	M. O'Neill — N. Ireland	A. Cohen — Israel
	R. Ponte — Switzerland	

I have chosen the most successful clubs in the last three years to further stress the incomparability of the subjects. There are 19 players listed, which is a sizeable percentage of the three clubs.

However, I am not undermining the quality of Englishmen as there are hosts of talented players available to selectors. The problem is they haven't found the 11 individuals who can work best as a team whereas club managers can find a good blend due to the wider range of options open to them.

So while England struggle to find that magical blend they will never be on a par with the League clubs.

Nevertheless, please continue club success abroad as it is enjoyed and shared by nations all over the world.

● One way or the other, English football is admired throughout the world. More, at times, than it is at home.



Gidman gets down to some serious training with his new United team-mates.

the way back."

One of the first tasks Thomas undertook was to arrange a tour of Goodison Park for his dad, Reg.

"I sought the manager's permission to do that straight away," he says. "I stood and watched football here with my dad on the Gladwys Street end for many years."

Thomas is looking forward to becoming part of the successful new era that Howard Kendall wants for Everton, while John Gidman will be hoping for the rewards he expected to win after leaving Aston Villa.

"It's rather ironic that they won the Championship last season while I was fighting a bitter battle against relegation with Everton," he says.

"Things didn't turn out the way I wanted them to at Goodison Park, but now I'm sure that I'll have a few medals when I finally hang up my boots.

"But I'm not thinking of doing that for quite a time yet!"

United's SWOP SHOP suits Gidman and Thomas

THE summer exchange between Manchester United midfielder Mickey Thomas and Everton full-back John Gidman has left both men with a great deal to celebrate.

Thomas, one of seven new signings at Everton, has joined the club he has supported for as long as he can remember. Gidman says simply: "It is a dream came true for me."

Gidman, the former England international full-back (he won his only cap playing against Luxembourg in 1977) spent 21 months at Everton, during which time very little had gone right.

"The move will do me a power of good," he says. "During the last couple of years I've had the feeling that my game has stood still."

He rarely produced the form shown at Aston Villa which prompted former Everton manager Gordon Lee to spend £650,000 to take Gidman from Villa Park.

"Everton's game didn't suit my style of play," says Gidman frankly. "At Villa the game is based on speed and running. I was encouraged to get forward, taking people on.

"At Goodison things were very different. Everton are more of a footballing side. The build-up was very slow. A crowded midfield — we usually had four across the park, with one man playing very wide on the right — didn't leave too much space for me."

His new boss, Ron Atkinson, has already told Gidman what he expects.

"The boss wants to see me getting forward as much as possible," says the full-back. "Mr Atkinson believes I can rediscover the form that won me an England cap. I hope he is right."

While Gidman was at Old Trafford taking the routine medical, the other half of the £400,000 deal, Everton receiving a cash balance of £50,000, Mickey Thomas, found himself acting like

a bright-eyed schoolboy.

"I watched my first game of football as a six-year-old at Everton," he says. "Ever since, I've wanted to play for them."

Things had gone very wrong for the Welsh international at Old Trafford. Thomas is unwilling to go into the real reasons behind his departure. But perhaps they go back further than the trouble he landed in when he skipped an end-of-season tour.

'Never Happy'

There's a hint when Thomas says: "I was never happy in the position I played at United. Dave Sexton always used me wide on the left, almost as a winger. I don't like playing that way.

"Howard Kendall has his own ideas about how to use me. What he has made plain is that he wants to see me getting into the penalty-area, scoring a few goals."

Ron Atkinson and Howard Kendall are obviously delighted with their acquisitions.

More important still, both players appear to have been given a fresh lease of life.

"When I signed for Everton I thought I was fortunate enough to have played for two of the best clubs in the land," says Gidman.

"But this is remarkable. I've now left Goodison Park and joined an even bigger club.

"I enjoyed my time at Everton. I made many friends in Liverpool and I hope the fans understand that I didn't ask for a move. But I couldn't have turned down United.

"The players at Everton are a great bunch of lads, and in the short time that I had dealings with Howard Kendall I was very impressed by his attitude.

"He is very positive. If he doesn't win anything this season he won't be far away. Believe me, he will put Everton back on the map."

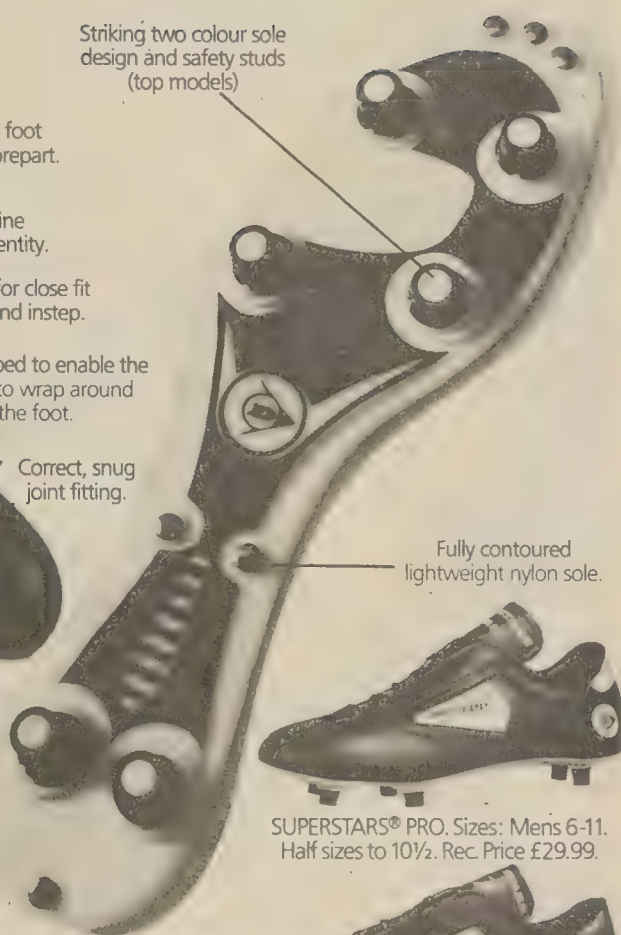
That will suit Mickey Thomas. "There aren't many places you could go to after Manchester United are there?" he asks. "But in my opinion I have taken a step in the right direction. Everton are on

Mickey Thomas before his switch to his boyhood heroes Everton.





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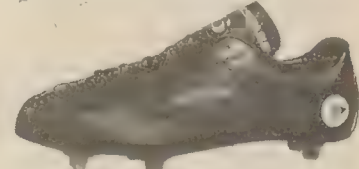
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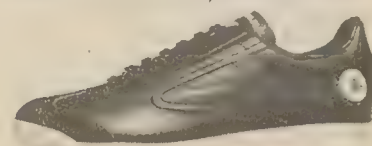
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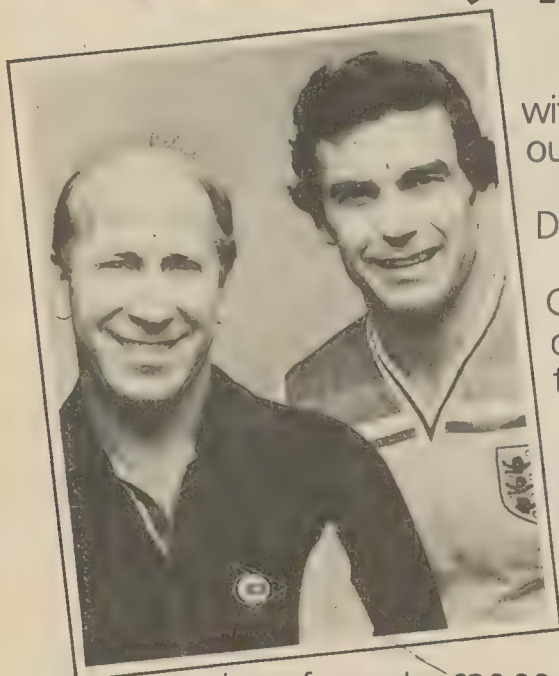


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CLUB SPOTLIGHT



Ipswich united for the title

Frans Thijssen (left) and Alan Brazil (below) are just two of the reasons why Ipswich believe they can win the League Championship this season.



FRANS Thijssen's decision to remain an Ipswich player for the next two years was the final piece in the club's Championship-challenging jigsaw.

The Dutch master rejected bids from Italian giants AC Milan, together with big-money offers from a host of other top European clubs, to stay at Portman Road and join the Ipswich hunt for the top prizes.

At one stage it looked as if Thijssen, whose exciting midfield skills earned him the Footballer of the Year award, was set to quit. Town boss Bobby Robson had even started the hunt for his successor.

But Robson says: "Frans has made what he feels is the right decision and everyone at the club is delighted. Replacing him would not have been easy. So when he said he was staying it was a real bonus.

"Now we're just hoping to start where we left off last time. It's not going to be easy, we know that, but we are entitled to feel confident. There's no doubt in my mind that this team is the best I have assembled at Ipswich."

Ipswich go into the new campaign with the same squad that came so close to winning a breathtaking treble last term. Apart from being pipped for the title by Villa, they were extra-time losers to Manchester City in the Semi-Final of the F.A. Cup before finally tasting success in the UEFA Cup.

Can they repeat the form that

made them the most talked about team in Britain? Skipper Mick Mills is in no doubt.

"At the end of last season I must admit I had slight reservations as to whether we could mount the same sort of challenge all over again," he says, "but that was because there was a chance of several changes taking place.

"For a start we might have lost the manager. All the talk about him possibly going to Sunderland or Manchester United had an unsettling effect and when he finally announced he was staying it seemed to lift the pressure.

Continuity

"Then there was the problem of both Frans and John Wark completing their contracts. Had one or the other decided to move on the continuity would have been broken. It was essential that we kept the squad intact.

"Nothing could make up for the disappointment of losing the title so everyone is determined to have a real go in the new season. There's a terrific spirit about the place and that's something potential Champions need."

Ipswich were the First Division's leading scorers last term when midfielder John Wark, the club's penalty expert, weighed in with 36 goals. He grabbed 14 of

Paul Mariner and Eric Gates, together with Alan Brazil of Scotland, showed a return of 58 goals last season, and their almost telepathic understanding is a key to the Ipswich success.

Defensively the Suffolk side are also strong. Centre-halves Russell Osman and Terry Butcher are reaping the benefit of having played alongside each other for six years in the youth, reserve and first teams at Portman Road, as well as graduating together to the senior England squad.

The discovery of last season was certainly versatile 20-year-old Steve McCall, at home in midfield or at full-back, while another defender, Kevin Steggles, made his mark towards the end of the campaign.

Ipswich will be hoping for better luck with injuries in the new season. Both George Burley, whose last appearance was in January, and Kevin Beattie, plagued by knee trouble and then a broken arm victim in the F.A. Cup Semi-Final, are on the mend.

Regular

Completing the squad are midfielder man Tommy Parkin and forwards Robin Turner and Kevin O'Callaghan, who is still the club's record cash signing at just over £200,000 from Millwall in January, 1980. Since then, despite never winning a regular place at club level, he has fought his way into the full Eire squad.

Everything in the Ipswich garden is rosy. They have just announced a record three-year sponsorship deal and plans are in the pipeline to erect a new £1.3 million grandstand in time for the 1982-83 season.

Perhaps by then the homely club will be celebrating their second Championship success. As manager Robson explains, the signs are good. "Two years ago we had a poor start but hauled ourselves up to third place," he says, "and last season we finished second.

"Now our aim is to go one better . . ."



Manager Bobby Robson

them in the victorious UEFA Cup campaign to equal an 18-year-old European record.

Playing between the Dutch duo of Thijssen and Arnold Muhren, he seems to have mastered the art of arriving in the danger area at just the right time. His goalscoring exploits will have made him a marked man, but there are plenty of other marksmen in the Town line-up.

The strike force of England pair

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BACK ROW (left to right) Frans Thijssen, George Burley, Russell Osman, Kevin Beattie, Kevin Steggles.
MIDDLE ROW: Bobby Robson (manager), Alan Brazil, Steve McCall, John Wark, Paul Cooper, Tommy Parkin, Robin Turner, Bobby Ferguson (assistant-manager).
FRONT ROW: Terry Butcher, Arnold Muhren, Kevin O'Callaghan, Mick Mills, Paul Mariner, Eric Gates.



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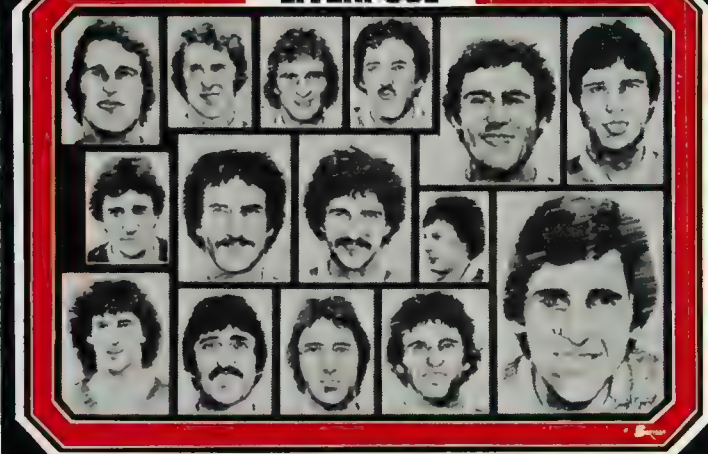
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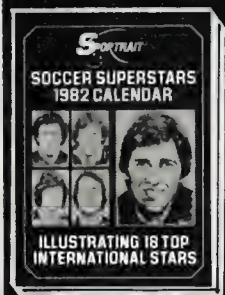
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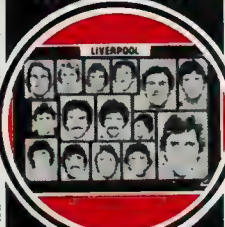
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FERGIE'S FIGHTING TALK!

THE many disappointments and setbacks suffered by Aberdeen last season will be the launching pad for an even more determined Championship challenge in the new campaign.

That's the view of their exuberant manager, Alex Ferguson, who steered The Dons to the title in 1980 and wants to see the Northern Lights shining as brightly as ever at Pittodrie again.

He says: "Confidence here is sky high. We've learned a number of lessons from our experiences last season and we won't make the same mistakes again. That's a promise!"

Ferguson, as sharp with words as he was as a goal-hungry forward in his playing days, suffered more than most last term as he watched his side relinquish their grip on the Championship.

Now, with another 36 Premier Division fixtures ahead of him, he believes Aberdeen are better equipped than ever to break the monopoly of Scotland's Old Firm of Celtic and Rangers for the second time in three years.

One of the main reasons for his optimism comes in the shape of flame-haired midfielder man Gordon Strachan, now fit to resume for club and country after injury kept him on the sidelines for a large part of last season.

'Terrific'

"He's a real gem of a player," says Ferguson. "Having him back fully fit is a terrific bonus because there's no doubt we badly missed him. It was a terrible blow at the time but now we can look to the future."

Apart from Strachan, rated in the £1 million class, Aberdeen have also welcomed back a fully fit John McMaster and have added record signing Peter Weir to their star-studded squad.

Ferguson trailed Weir for almost a year before persuading his old club, St Mirren, to part with the personality winger in a deal valued at £300,000 and which saw Ian Scanlon move in the opposite direction.

Most of The Dons' problems last season stemmed from their European Cup defeat by Liverpool. They had a mountain to climb in going to Anfield for the second-leg trailing 1-0 and Bob Paisley's side promptly rattled in another four goals without reply.

"That was our heaviest defeat since I became manager," says

Maybe Aberdeen attack too much — but I think it's the right attitude

Ferguson. "I don't want to make excuses but we went into that second game with a makeshift side. We were missing several regulars, young Andy Dornan was pushed in for his debut and we had to pull striker Drew Jarvie back into midfield.

"In the end, however, we were well beaten and we could not argue with the result. But our young lads have matured so well since then that I'd love another crack at Liverpool now. I just know we'd make a game of it."

Just seven days after their exit from Europe The Dons were knocked out of the League Cup after a home defeat by Dundee. Then their League form suffered and their injury-ravaged squad

was really up against it.

"I suppose the real turning point was when we went to Rangers and I was only able to field four players who had won a Championship medal the previous season," says Ferguson. "That was towards the end of January and we were several points clear of Celtic at the top of the table."

"After that we staggered on in the League. Two weeks before the end there was still a mathematical chance that we could win it but we could not match Celtic for consistency."

"Our confidence had taken a bit of a bashing, players had become over-anxious and with every game we lost the damage was that bit more difficult to repair. Just when we needed Celtic to slip up they went on an incredible run and took 27 points out of a possible 28."

"You've got to give them the credit they deserve. They won it in style but they know we'll be after them in the new season. And I hope there are other clubs ready to offer a real challenge because that's the only way our game can survive."

"I know the Premier Division has its critics but from a purely personal point of view it is good for Aberdeen. There's a great sense of fear about so many of the games which is a big problem."

"Obviously, with just ten clubs and two to be relegated the situation is tight. Maybe just one



Peter Weir

should go down but I think the real answer is for some clubs to change their attitudes. The Premier Division throws up a lot of good fixtures, like local derbies for example, and they're healthy for the game. But only if clubs are positive."

"Here at Aberdeen we don't know any other way. Everything we do in training is geared to being positive on match days. We like to entertain and there are times when I think we maybe go overboard, playing just three at the back away from home and letting players go forward from any position. But I think it's the right attitude."

The many English clubs casting envious eyes in the direction of Pittodrie are wasting their time according to Ferguson, who has gathered together a squad littered with full internationals.

Famous

Goalkeeper Jim Leighton, full-back Stuart Kennedy, central defenders Alex McLeish and Willie Miller, midfielder man Strachan and new boy Weir have all worn the famous navy blue and will be pushing for places in Jock Stein's squad which already has one foot on the road to Spain for next year's World Cup Finals.

Manager Ferguson is convinced he has the players to put Aberdeen back on top. But he admits he will also be studying his own performances from one game to another.

"I'm a great believer in self-analysis," he explains. "There were times last season when we lost and I worried about whether I'd picked the right team, if our preparations were right or if I'd delivered the best possible team talk beforehand. That's something I will always do before I criticise a player and try to pin the blame on someone else."

"The problems of last season taught me a lot. If the same sort of situations arise again I'll be better at tackling them. I'm sure the players feel the same and we're determined to show that winning the title two seasons back was no fluke."



Gordon Strachan in midfield combat for Scotland against the Portuguese.

BAYERN MUNICH spent five days training near Hamburg, living in a luxury hotel, that cost the club more than £5,000.

Meanwhile, neighbours Munich 1860, who are broke, arranged for their players to stay at an army camp for their pre-season training, the players sleeping six to a room and the club paying only £8 a day all-in for the players room and board.

THE first buys of Belenenses' manager Artur Jorge, the former Portuguese star, included a 19-year-old Brazilian called Garrinchinha. He is the eldest son of the famous Garrincha.

WORLD WIDE



Compiled by CHRIS DAVIES

Ode to George Best

WHOEVER said England and the United States were two nations divided by a common language was spot on... as far as soccer reporting is concerned.

George Best's San Jose Earthquakes have had a dreadful time on away trips, but won 3-2 in Fort Lauderdale with two goals and an assist by the Northern Ireland superstar.

One reporter, though, was somewhat carried away and in his telexed match report there was a 22-line ode to George Best, which included the following:

Best took a pass, moved in on the right, The look from Van Beveren was one of sheer fright, But the shot hit the bar, it missed by an inch, Wait, Hukic is there, the shot is a cinch.



France goes foreign

THE French League was, as usual, the first of the Western European competitions to kick-off, with Champions St.-Etienne aiming to stave off challenges from Nantes, Bordeaux, Paris St Germain and Sochaux.

This year there are no fewer than 20 new foreign names in the French First Division, including Bosco Jankovic and Raimondo Ponte (left) — names familiar to English fans.

Ten of the new foreigners are from Yugoslavia; two are from Denmark; two from Iceland; two from Poland; one from Switzerland; one from Sweden (Ralf Edstrom); one from Senegal; and one from Turkey.

And strangely enough, on the first day of the League programme, 70 per cent of the goals were scored by foreign players!

South American summit



THREE-TIMES World Champions Brazil and current World Champions Argentina. They've got to be the bookmakers' favourites to carry off next year's World Cup, even though it is being played in Europe. Menotti's Argentina, with men such as Maradona, Fillol, Passarella and Kempes, have enough talent to beat anybody. And the Brazilians, after notching sensational wins in England, France and West Germany on their European tour, have shown that they're currently superior to anything Europeans have to offer.

The Brazilian authorities have turned down flat an invitation from the Argentinians to play a friendly in Buenos Aires later this year. "It would only be an excuse for them to seek revenge for us beating them in the Copa de Oro," said a Brazilian spokesman. "We won't be meeting Argentina again until next year. In Spain, and with the World Cup at stake."



In the meantime, Argentine boss Cesar Luis Menotti (left) accompanied Brazil on their European tour, making mental notes from the stand while his Brazilian counterpart Tele Santana (right) was sweating it out on the bench. Both men share strong views about the way football should be played. Each has a respect bordering on fear of the other. Each regards the other as the major obstacle standing between their countries and soccer's top prize. Until then, both will be playing a cat-and-mouse game...

MENOTTI: It's good to see Brazil respecting the great traditions of Brazilian-style football again, no?

SANTANA: I believe football is an art, and the artists should be able to show their best qualities on the pitch. So, yes, I want Brazil to play modern football, but based on the Brazilian players' native ball-skills. We've been trying to add an adequate physical preparation to this, so that we can compete for the full 90 minutes and match the mobility of European teams.

MENOTTI: I thought the Germans were the best. Their play seemed full of variation and possibilities for the future. And of course they're as powerful as ever. I know we both beat them in the Copa de Oro in Uruguay, but I still rate them as a very good side.

SANTANA: Yes, but technically I've been impressed by the French recently. I was a little disappointed by their performance against us, admittedly, but I feel they have the technical resources to improve, and they could be a danger in Spain next year. England...

MENOTTI: Yes, the English seem to be going through a very bad patch. But English football has always been erratic.

SANTANA: I wouldn't include any Englishmen among my top players at the moment. They've got no one like the Frenchmen Platini and Tresor, for example. They haven't got a Rummenigge or a Hansi Muller...

MENOTTI: Do you think you'll bring back anyone from Europe for your World Cup squad? Falcao, Dirceu...?

SANTANA: I think the only one who could interest me is Falcao. But only if he's available right from the beginning of our preparation programme. And you?

MENOTTI: Kempes is already back in Argentina, of course. Bertoni and Ardiles maybe, but I think the same as you — if they can't work with the rest of the squad for at least six weeks before we travel to Spain it'll be too difficult

for them to re-adapt to our style of play. I think this was proved when they came back for the Copa de Oro.

SANTANA: Yes, Ardiles is one of my favourite Argentine players, along with Kempes, Fillol, Passarella and Gallego. I don't think Gallego gets the recognition he deserves, because he's a vital cog in your side, and does a perfect job. Of course I like Maradona, though I feel he over-does the individual stuff.

MENOTTI: We're perhaps lucky that we won the World Cup with quite a young side, and most of the team are still available. Have you had any problems

getting your team together?

SANTANA: Not really. I just insist that people keep their noses out of my job! I don't enjoy the same privileges as you — I mean you whisk six River Plate players off to a training camp and nobody complains. If I did that to Flamengo they'd lynch me! Our preparations are going as well as could be expected — though I'm still not entirely happy about two or three positions in the side.

MENOTTI: What positions are they?

SANTANA: Top secret! You'll find out next year. In Spain...



RUSSIAN golden boy, star left-winger Oleg Blokhin, was sent-off during Dynamo Kiev's 4-0 win over Pachtakor Taschkent. He is likely to receive a long suspension, for not many Russians are sent-off and the F.A. deals very strictly with those who are.

GUNTER NETZER, business manager of Hamburger SV, has announced that this season his club will want £35,000, plus all expenses, to play friendly matches in other countries.

'Less running or we'll break your leg'

IN ARGENTINA, the infamous Juan Carlos Lorenzo (manager of their 1966 World Cup team) has been accused by a newspaper in Rosario of using "unsporting tricks" during San Lorenzo's 1-1 draw with local team Newell's Old Boys.

The paper says the San Lorenzo boss told Newell's player Ramos, at half-time, not to run so much after the interval otherwise he'd have a leg broken; that Lorenzo ordered the ball boys to throw in old balls during the game so that Newell's superior ball skills would be nullified; and for the ball boys to run on to the field "by mistake" to hinder a dangerous move by the opposition. In fact, a ball boy DID run on and grab a pass from Gallego to Ramos.

News flashes

● Robbie Rensenbrink, now 34, who played for Holland in two World Cup Finals has been given a free transfer by the NASL club Portland Timbers. He had offers to play in Saudi Arabia, Holland and France and has signed for the French Division Two club FC Toulouse.

● East Germany's Oberliga fixtures have five blank weekends in the first half of the new League season — to help the national team. Before the vital home game v Poland, for example, on October 10th the last club games are on 26th September, leaving the national squad 14 days together.

● In a pre-season friendly for Bundesliga club Eintracht Braunschweig, former international goalkeeper Bernd Franke played 20 minutes on the field and scored two goals with headers.

● Kurt Welzl (below, left), the 26-year-old Austrian international striker who was the top League scorer in AZ '67 Alkmaar's League and Cup double success in Holland last

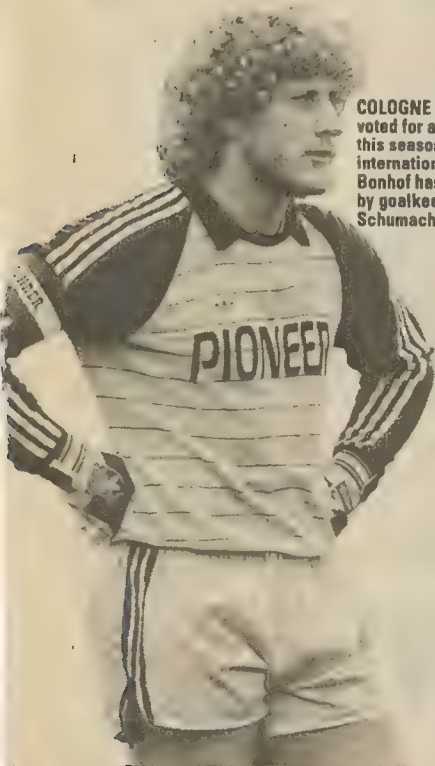
season has been transferred to Valencia for £400,000.

● Sepp Maier is starring in a German made for TV film series. Seven episodes are planned and Sepp receives more than £2,000 for appearing in each one.

● The five years spent in Greece by Kazimierz Gorski were highly successful. His record there is:

1977 Champions and Cup Winners with Panathinaikos.
1978 Winners of Balkan Cup with Panathinaikos.
1979 Led Division II club Kastoria to promotion.
1980 Champions with Olympiakos (Piraeus).
1981 Champions and Cup Winners with Olympiakos.

● The Chinese national squad, preparing for the World Cup eliminators with New Zealand, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, have spent two weeks training in West Germany under coach Su Jung Shun. They played five friendly matches, winning them all and the general opinion is that they would do well in the Bundesliga II, while two or three players would be good enough for the top Division.



COLOGNE players have voted for a new captain this season. Former international Rainer Bonhof has been replaced by goalkeeper Toni Schumacher (left).

'Amateur' Müller

IT looks like Gerd Müller's career is finally nearing an end. He's out in the cold at Fort Lauderdale, where he's been substitute most of this season; hasn't found an American club for the indoor soccer season, and is considering returning to West Germany to play in amateur football.

Amateur? Well, amateur club Unterhaching have offered Der Bomber £1,000 a month, £60 per goal plus a free car.

BORUSSIA Dortmund had fans queuing up to buy season tickets when they went on sale. In the first week they sold 5,300 bringing in £450,000 cash.

Kempes accused by former boss



I've been talking about River Plate's problems in finding the cash to pay off Mario Kempes' £1,600,000 transfer fee. Their latest move is to run a sort of lottery and, if all the tickets are sold, the club stands to net £1,600,000!

Talking about Mario Kempes, his ex-manager Pasieguito (left) has been hitting the headlines in Spain after a Valencia internal memorandum was leaked to the Press.

Apparently Pasieguito urged the directors to get rid of Kempes because of the Argentine star's hectic nightlife, mainly in a discotheques where he was joint-owner with his brother-in-law.

Mario denies the allegation strongly and insists that he was always at home by 11 pm. "Pasieguito's probably angry," he remarks, "because he didn't get a nice slice of my transfer fee."

CRAFTY MOVE

THERE'S always something going on at Barcelona — even in the summer!

This time it's the club president, Josep Lluís Núñez who's sparked off fierce controversy by calling for new elections during the close season — and a year before they were due.

It's a crafty move by Núñez, who feels he might have massive support from the fans following Barcelona's Cup victory last season, whereas once the new season gets under way, it's probably going to be the old, old story of problems all the way for the Catalan club!

Incidentally, the auditors called in to have a thorough look at the club's books have confirmed that Barcelona finished last season with a surplus of £1,075,000 despite their early exit from the U.E.F.A. Cup.

ENGLAND have a vital World Cup date away to Norway early in the new season and the Norwegians have an unusual choice keeping goal for them.

Roy Amundsen is 26-years-old and earned his 15th cap in the 1-1 draw at home to Switzerland. He plays for 'unknown' club Snøgg Notodden of the Third Division, which is the equivalent of Peter Shilton or Ray Clemence playing in the Southern League.

FERENC BENE, the former Ujpest Dozsa and Hungary striker, is now playing in Finland. 36-years-old, Bene is playing with Sepsí 78, who play at Seinäjoki in northern Finland.

'Keeper who can't speak

CALIFORNIA SURF goalkeeper Alan Mayer (below) wears a helmet during games to protect himself — he's had too many knocks for his liking, the last requiring 35 stitches.

But Alan, who's had more concussions than he can remember, can't end his run of bad luck: his jaw was broken during Surf's 7-0 defeat of San Jose Earthquakes.

His jaw is now wired shut and he has to take a blender with him on road trips to whip up the needed nourishment. Room service brings him fruit juice, yogurt and ice cream — the blender does the rest.

Alan admits not being able to speak is a problem, and has sore hands through clapping in an effort to attract the attention of his defenders!



ATLÉTICO Madrid's signing of Mexican star Hugo Sánchez (right) is a strange affair.

The Spanish club has paid Universidad de Mexico £90,000 to have the 23-year-old international striker on loan for one year.

And if they want to keep him they'll have to pay another £450,000 next summer.

What's more, Sánchez will head back to Mexico in October to spend the best part of two months with the Mexican national team in their bid to qualify for the World Cup Finals in Spain.

So Sánchez will only play around 30 matches for Atlético, at £3,000 per game...



COLOMBIA had a grim start to their World Cup campaign.

Not only did they drop a home point to Peru in a 1-1 draw in Bogotá, but they also face severe disciplinary measures after a fan raced on to the pitch five minutes before time and attacked Argentine referee Arturo Iturralde.

By the way, Colombia's manager Carlos Bilardo (Man Utd fans will remember him!) was shown the red card at the end of the first half.

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POWER

Who will make the headlines in the Third and Fourth Divisions?

JOHN Bond and Ron Atkinson are not going to have things all their own way in the publicity stakes up in the North-West this season.

Someone by the name of Tommy Docherty will make sure of that!

The Doc breezed back up there in the close season to take charge of Preston, sadly relegated to the Third Division.

He took over from Nobby Stiles promising to make things happen. And anyone who knows the bouncy Docherty would not bet a brass farthing against him doing it. Lawrie McMenemy rates Preston's promotion the biggest certainty of the season!

Preston have not enjoyed the best of fortune in recent years. It's our bet that all that is about to change and we expect the Docherty inspired Deepdale side to be challenging for a quick return to the Second Division.

And don't be surprised if neigh-

"A lot of people are asking me why I should turn my back on all that glorious sunshine and marvellous life-style — to take on a job like this," says Peacock — who had 17 years with Charlton before heading out to America.

"Quite simply I'm at a stage of my career when I wanted to be a number one to prove myself and the Gillingham offer was just too good to turn down."

Portsmouth did enough last time out to suggest they will be a force again. But we see little hope of a quick return for either of the Bristol clubs — relegated together.

Bristol has been a depressed soccer area for a long time now and it is surely asking too much of



Sheffield United (stripes) know they must escape the Fourth Division at the first time of asking to avoid financial problems.

DOC 'CERTAIN' TO GAIN PROMOTION

hours Burnley are up there battling for honours with them. Brian Miller — a complete opposite of Docherty — has quietly put together a fine young side who were in the running for most of last season.

Look also for Southend to do well. The last time they came out of the Fourth Division they dropped back in double quick time. Now they have come up again — with manager Dave Smith claiming they are geared to go on to better things.

Legendary

One of the great names of the past — Greaves — could play a part in any success Southend enjoy. No, not the legendary Jimmy — of Tottenham and England fame — but his 18-year-old son Danny, who is making a big impression at the Essex seaside club.

It may be too early for Keith Peacock's influence to carry Gillingham into the race for promotion.

Peacock gave up the lush life of Florida — where he was assistant coach to the Tampa Bay Rowdies — to come back home and take over from axed Gerry Summers at Priestfield.



City's Bob Houghton or Terry Cooper, at Rovers, to turn the tide so quickly.

When it comes to confidence David Webb takes some beating. He was saying BEFORE last season was over that Bournemouth were certs for promotion from the Fourth Division this time round.

And as he's a man not given to making outrageous statements it's obvious he means business.

As a player he was as honest as they come, never giving less than 100 per cent. He demands the same from those under him now. He is getting it as well — that's why we go along with Webb and tip The Cherries to make a strong challenge.

But it is going to be a heck of a dog fight in the Fourth this season, for the quality has never been higher.

Illustrious names like Sheffield United and Blackpool are down there, for the first time. They face financial ruin if they don't get out in double quick time — which is what they will be aiming to do.

Ian Porterfield must fancy

United's chances of doing it, too. For he gave up the manager's job at newly promoted Rotherham to move to Bramall Lane.

Hull City, too, also find themselves down among the 'dead men' of the Fourth Division. And with manager Mike Smith and coach Cyril Lea on lucrative contracts that's not a situation they are likely to tolerate for too long.

So look for all these three to be challenging for promotion. With so much at stake they can't afford not to.

Boost

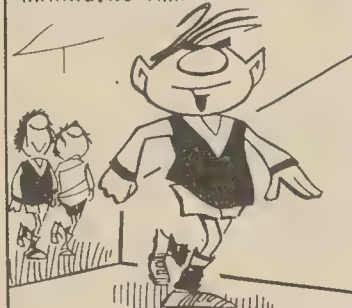
The arrival of John Duncan — the former Spurs and Derby striker — as manager of Scunthorpe should give them a boost. But not, we fear, big enough to make them a threat.

And the same must be said of Colchester — who dropped out of the Third with the big three last season and lack the financial resources to do much about strengthening for a renewed challenge.

Surprise packet here could be Northampton. They lost only one of their last 15 matches at the end of last term and if they can carry on where they left off they could be in with a chance.

NOBBY

I DON'T LIKE TWISTING THE MANAGER'S ARM



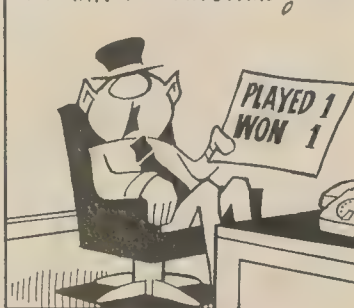
BUT YOU MUST STRIKE WHEN THE IRON'S HOT IN THIS GAME



I'VE COME TO ASK FOR AN IMPROVED CONTRACT, BOSS



EVEN A GOOD START TO THE SEASON CAN HAVE ITS PROBLEMS!



WE'RE only a few days away from the big k.o. of what promises to be a crucial season, yet Old Trafford has been buzzing with excitement for weeks.

Since Ron Atkinson's appointment, our fans have been eager for the action to start and are already talking about the Championship.

Although I'm confident we will be up there challenging with the best, I believe the title might be asking too much this season considering all the recent changes at United.

Anyway, Ron Atkinson is under no immediate pressure from the boardroom. Apparently chairman Mr. Martin Edwards has told him they won't mind if United don't win a major honour for a couple of years as long as the team is a credit to the club and entertains the fans.

But our new boss is very ambitious and won't be content with cheers without the silverware.

Like me he finds it hard to believe a club with such a universal following has only won the F.A. Cup and Second Division Championship since their European Cup triumph in 1968.

In his four years at West Brom they didn't win anything, but

John Gidman was signed by United to ensure the defence was sound enough when they attack.

qualified for Europe three times.

I hope Ron maintains that consistency at Old Trafford. I miss not playing in Europe. It's a tragedy a club of United's stature has not taken part in foreign competition for several years.

The first time I met Ron I realised he has the right charisma to bring back some of the club's lost glory.

He asked me what my hopes and ambitions were and that he wanted me to attack and score more goals.

Like Ray Wilkins I've been given more freedom, but I won't take advantage of it. I shall only go forward for set pieces. I'm at my best staying at the back.

As you know I love scoring goals, but accept the fact I'm no Joe Jordan.

The boss has such a way with words I'm sure he could have persuaded Joe to stay at United if he'd taken over a few weeks earlier.

Unfortunately his appointment



Frank Stapleton will fill the gap left by Joe. In fact his style should suit Garry Birtles more.

Gidman was signed to ensure our defence is tight enough to hold out when we do go forward. Although Ron Atkinson's aim is to attack he knows it's no use leaving the back door open.

John will be a tremendous asset to the side. Although I haven't played against him too often I've been impressed with what I've seen in pre-season matches.

United sacked Dave Sexton because we lacked flair and style. He'll have the opportunity of seeing if Ron Atkinson has made us more positive when we meet Dave's new club Coventry City this Saturday.

Whoever works the Football League fixture computer must have a callous sense of humour to have paired the two clubs together at the start of the season.

It's a game United would have preferred later. Obviously Dave will be keen to do well against his old club and Coventry will need little motivation in their first home match.

'United don't have to win honours -yet'



GORDON McQUEEN

Talking soccer

Although United won 2-0 at Highfield Road in the League last season, it's not one of my favourite grounds. I don't know why, but I just don't feel particularly happy or confident there.

But it's vital to get off to a good start, especially with the new three points for a win rule. I don't think the system will make much difference to the League positions at the end of the season, but it could early on.

Damage

Lose your first two games, and you'll find yourself six points adrift. The psychological effect could seriously damage a team's confidence.

United's second game is a real humdinger, at home to Nottingham Forest. With a new boss and players on parade it's no wonder the game has been sold out for weeks.

We drew last season's corresponding match 1-1. I'm confident we will win and can grab the three points this time.

Next time I'll tell you why I think Liverpool can be Champions again and which clubs I consider outsiders for honours.

Join me then . . .



came too late. By the time he arrived at Old Trafford Joe had agreed terms with AC Milan and there was no turning back.

It was a shock to many United fans when Ron Atkinson's first move was to sign full-back John Gidman from Everton when our obvious need was for a striker to replace Joe.

The big man was our leading scorer last season with 14 First Division goals and we could struggle unless we strengthen our fire power.

United's new manager Ron Atkinson is keen to bring success to Old Trafford.

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Silver/Royal - 34", 36"/38", 42".
Red/Black - 34", 36"/38",
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THE pressure is really on Sunderland in 1981-82. The club has won League Championships and F.A. Cups, but it is more than 25 years since The Wearsiders finished above 15th position in the First Division — and the vociferous Roker fans are demanding success.

New manager Alan Durban says: "New players are essential if we are to win the First Division Championship or qualify for Europe. It may also be necessary if we are even to finish halfway."

Now or never at Roker...

"I reckon that with the playing staff as it is, we might finish three, four, or maybe five places better off than we were last season. That has to be our priority."

And in 1980-81, The Wearsiders narrowly avoided relegation, finishing sixth from bottom after a last-gasp victory over Liverpool at Anfield.

But in the present economic climate, big-figure deals seem unlikely to be a common happening at Roker, though Durban is anxious to guard against a situation in which the existing squad face another battle to stay in Division One.

He says: "I want to find out the implications of buying one or two players on the club's financial structure."

The Sunderland chairman, Tom

Cowie, after sacking manager Ken Knighton and his assistant Frank Clarke last April, has stressed that he believes the club have found the right man in Durban — and that being so, will give the new boss his backing.

But Cowie, a motor magnate who has made his money by hard work and shrewd investment, is a controversial figurehead at Roker who does not pretend to be an easy taskmaster. And in the transfer market, he will be wary of Sunderland making the sort of deal transacted by ex-manager Knighton when he paid out £380,000 for Claudio Marangoni last term.

Cowie has made no secret of the fact that he considered the buying of Marangoni to be one of the worst deals made in football in recent years. So the Sunderland chairman is certain to carefully vet any future excursions by the club into the transfer market.

New Blood

But Sunderland desperately require new blood if they are to succeed this season.

If attendances at nearby Newcastle last season could drop to an average of 18,000, less by 10,000 the figure The Magpies need to survive, Sunderland could undergo the same chilling experience this season.

North-East fans, be they at St. James' Park or Roker, will only take so much — Sunderland, take a look at struggling Newcastle United. And be warned.

Sunderland will boost Munro's World Cup chances

SCOTTISH defender Iain Munro has the World Cup on his mind ... and intends using Sunderland as his springboard to Spain.

Munro dreams of playing for Scotland in the Finals next year and that was a major factor in his decision to leave Stoke for Roker Park shortly before the start of the season.

The former St. Mirren player had only been at the Victoria Ground for nine months, but still had no doubts about heading to the North-East.

"I was happy with Stoke, but there's no doubt that playing for Sunderland will increase my chances of making Scotland's squad for the World Cup, if we qualify.

"I say 'If we qualify', but I'm certain we'll be there next summer and I dearly want to be part of it."

Munro already has seven Scottish caps, the last against England



at Hampden Park last year. Injury cost him his place at left-back and he didn't win another cap last season.

"With all due respect to Stoke, they are not a club that people in Scotland know much about and I seemed to drift out of the international scene," recalls Munro.

'Limelight'

"Sunderland gives me the chance to get back into the Scottish limelight because they have a good following over the border and receive plenty of coverage in Scotland's newspapers.

"Roker Park gives me the right stage, now it's up to me to show the form that will persuade Jock Stein to give me another chance.

"Every player dreams of appearing in the World Cup Finals and I'm no exception, but I'm 29 now and I know this is my last chance. I'll be too old in four years time."

Munro, who comes from Uddingston, the village near Glas-

gow where Nottingham Forest's John Robertson was brought up, had two other reasons for plumping for Sunderland when Alan Durban offered £150,000 for him.

One was Durban himself, the manager who took Munro to Stoke last October; the other was as assurance that Munro would be playing in his favourite left-back position.

"Sunderland may be a sleeping giant at the moment. I know as well as Mr. Durban that the place will respond to any success he can bring.

"His presence at Sunderland was enough to ensure I would sign, but I could hardly wait to put pen to paper when he said I would be replacing Joe Bolton in the number three shirt."

"For much of last season I played in midfield for Stoke, but there is no doubt left-back is my best position and the one which gives me my best chance of more Scottish caps."



CLUB SPOTLIGHT

DO YOU think you can play football and fancy training with a League club this season? The thrilling opportunity for youngsters is offered by a club many fans believed were dead and buried at the end of last season.

But far from being down and out after nosediving from the First to the Second Division after only one season, Leicester City are buoyant and striving to regain their rightful place at the top.

They have unveiled an exciting package they believe will offer the local community a rare chance to forge strong links with the club.

They are inviting any youngster who wants to play football with the club's stars to attend training sessions on the first Sunday of every month for the whole of the 1981-82 season.

The announcement has already sent a ripple of excitement through the Midlands as youngsters realise they can try to out-shoot Jim Melrose, Leicester's Glasgow-born striker who restored pride to the club at the start of the year by scoring the winning goals against Liverpool



and Manchester United and hammering a hat-trick against Norwich in the last League game of the season.

Steve Lynex, a £60,000 signing from Birmingham City, will also mix freely with the youngsters, and a whole host of other Leicester stars will happily exchange soccer yarns with their younger brethren.

The difference between Leicester and Norwich City and Crystal Palace, their relegation counterparts four months ago, is that they fell from grace at a time when they were winning handsomely.

Relegation

In the first 27 League games last season they gained only 14 points. Few local supporters in their 20,000 average Filbert Street gates would have put money on them escaping relegation.

Then they beat Liverpool. And Manchester United. And Tottenham. And Arsenal... and they accumulated 18 points from their next 15 matches.

Unfortunately, Leicester's revival came too late to save them from relegation, but their form ensured that Jock Wallace kept his job as manager and the fans look forward to the new season with

Jim Melrose (top) was Leicester's leading scorer last season. His most famous goal was undoubtedly the winner in the 2-1 victory at Anfield in January (above).

eager anticipation.

They go into the new campaign with much the same line-up as last season. The average age of the side is 20 — one of the youngest in the four Divisions — and from 26 full-time professionals and 14 apprentices they will offer stiff opposition in the national and local Leagues in which they are represented.

Eleven players were given free transfers at the end of last season, including Pat Byrne, Dublin born midfield player, who joined from Irish club Shelbourne; Derek Strickland, a striker born in Stoneyburn; Paul Edmunds, another striker from Doncaster; and Everton Carr, who made his League debut when former full-back Dennis Rofe was injured in 1978-79.

Steve Lynex, free moving left winger or left-sided midfielder player from Birmingham, was their only signing but they are confident that the side which shocked the Anfield crowd in Leicester's storming victory last January can make a swift return to the First Division.

"The fans have great confidence



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COME AND JOIN US!

Jock Wallace (right) will be relying on the experience of captain and goalkeeper Mark Wallington (below) in the coming months.



capacity 32,000 gate can sit in comfort — will challenge last season's average 20,000 gates if they do well in the Second Division.

Dozens of Under-12's have already taken advantage of the club's new Junior Foxes scheme, which offers schoolchildren coaching, a card on their birthdays, newsletter and other incentives to take their support to the club rather than their rival Midland teams.

Unfortunate

Alan Bennett claims that five or six of last season's team were worthy of First Division football and were most unfortunate to lose that status.

No names no pack-drill, but the skills of John O'Neill, Jim Melrose, Mark Wallington, Martin Henderson, Larry May and Steve Lynex had clearly impressed him.

Leicester City have always had First Division pretensions. The 1981-82 season is no exception. Just watch the youngsters go with older heads on their shoulders this time.

in Jock Wallace," says Leicester secretary Alan Bennett. "They appreciate we haven't the money to spend £1 million and seem happy with the progress made despite relegation."

Mr Bennett's optimism is supported by the response to Leicester's Open Day shortly before the season's start. The club considered cancellation of the event after heavy rain throughout the day, but took a chance. No fewer than 4,000 fans braved the conditions to attend.

Understandably, season ticket sales are 20 per cent down on last season, but the Midland club are confident that their private boxes and superb seating accommodation — half the

LEICESTER CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

KIRBY'S WEST Milk IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN.



LEICESTER CITY

BACK ROW (left to right): Gary Lineker, Andy Peake, Tommy Williams, John O'Neill, Kevin Macdonald, Martin Henderson, Billy Gibson.

MIDDLE ROW: Paul Ramsey, Geoff Scott, Alan Young, Larry May, Nicky Walker, Mark Wallington, Norman Leet, Peter Welsh, Stuart Hamill.

FRONT ROW: Ian MacFarlane (asst. manager), Neil Grewcock, Dave Buchanan, Steve Lynox, Jim Melrose, Ian Wilson, Bobby Smith, Paul Flar, Jock Wallace (manager).

Crunch for Curbishley



ASTON Villa's marvellous League Championship win could have dramatic effects in another part of the Midlands this season — just down the road at St Andrews.

Villa's title has made Birmingham's squad all the more determined to come out of the shadows and earn their own place in the League spotlight.

As midfield star Alan Curbishley explains: "We've found out what Everton have gone through while Liverpool were winning everything — except it's been twice as bad because West Bromwich Albion have clinched a place in Europe as well.

"It seems unfair that Birmingham are suddenly being cast as the poor relations in the Midlands, when in fact we didn't have a bad season last term.

"It was our first after winning promotion, and we consolidated well, and only slipped back when we had injury problems.

"But life was pretty unbearable — and still is at times," says cockney Curbishley. "It seemed you couldn't step out the front door without hearing about what Villa were doing. There was always somebody wanting to know why we couldn't do better."

Curbishley believes that Birmingham can, in fact, do better this term.

Experienced

"We must have a chance. We've got a much younger squad, but still with good experienced players as well.

"With all the injuries we had last season the youngsters were given a chance, and they proved they were worth places in the first team squad. Suddenly at 23 I've become one of the team's old men!"

For former England youth captain Curbishley, the new season brings a chance to put his own career back on the right lines. He missed the last 14 games of last term after chipping a bone in his knee.

"It was in a game at Brighton. I went into a tackle, felt the knee bang, but got up and even ended the move by scoring a goal. But as I hit the shot I went down, and didn't get up again.

"Unfortunately it took eight weeks before they sorted out exactly what was wrong, and by then my season was as good as over.

"This is the crunch season for me, that's why I reported back for training a month early. The last time I had kicked a ball I had scored. Perhaps I can do that a few more times so that Villa's players start hearing all about what we are doing!"

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SHOOT



Manchester City full-back Ray Ranson clears the danger posed by Southampton skipper Kevin Keegan.

SHOOT!

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SPORTSMAN'S BOOK CLUB

The Rangers skipper joins SHOOT

I HOPE the Celtic lads enjoyed their champagne after last season's title triumph... it is the last they are going to taste for quite some time if I have my way.

Fighting talk? You bet! I'm marking my debut as a SHOOT columnist with a prediction — I believe Rangers will be crowned Kings of Scotland at the end of the season.

Don't mistake confidence for complacency. That wouldn't be tolerated by manager, John Greig. O.K., why am I so certain that there'll be cheers at Ibrox and tears at Parkhead in the race for the Championship?

Quite simply, I think Rangers, on form, are the best team in Scotland and I believe we will continue to improve in the coming months.

We have got a strong squad of players, but Mr Greig insists we are still two players short of being the completed article and I wouldn't disagree with that.

Exciting times are ahead for everyone connected with Rangers. I took over as skipper of the club nearing the end of last season and I felt like jumping over the Hampden stand on the evening of May 12 when we won the Scottish Cup with a devastating 4-1 replay victory over Dundee United.

That, I'm sure, marked the start of something good.

Hungry

It's difficult to describe my feelings that night. The euphoria makes thing seem a little hazy, but I'll tell you something — I enjoyed that special magic of skipping a team to a major trophy and I'm hungry to sample that success a lot more in the future.

I may be the captain of this marvellous club, but, really, when we are playing there are 11 captains out on the field.

That's the team spirit that is very much in evidence at Ibrox at the moment.

The chairman Ray Simpson said recently that Rangers had one of the best football grounds in the world, some of the best supporters in the world and he expected us to be one of the best teams in the world.

It is a tall order, but it is a challenge everyone at Ibrox is determined to meet and overcome.

Celtic? I don't think they will let that title go without an almighty fight, but, yet again, that's the sort of test this current Rangers side is looking forward to.

The Parkhead boys are always dangerous opponents, but they had their moment of glory last season and now it is our turn to become Champions once again.

Don't get me wrong, though. I



ALLY DAWSON says

'WE'RE THE BEST— AND WE'LL PROVE IT'

Aberdeen are sure to be one of the teams leading the challenge for the Scottish Premier Division Championship.



Ally (left) helps to blot out the threat of Dundee United's Ralph Milne during last season's Scottish Cup Final at Hampden Park.

don't believe it will be a straight fight between ourselves and our life-long rivals from across Glasgow for the title. There are so many good teams in the Premier Division, and I must say I like the look of Aberdeen.

A lot of people have been dismissing them in recent months, but don't include me in that number. They might have had a barren sea-

son last time but they did have a lot of injuries to key players such as Gordon Strachan and John McMaster and they were still looking for a replacement up front for Steve Archibald.

No, I won't forget the lads from Pittodrie. They are a solid, good looking outfit and I think they will make their presence felt.

Dundee United have a whole

army of admirers and it's easy to see why when you see them in full flow.

They've won the League Cup twice in the past two years and I know manager Jim McLean, brother of Rangers' Tommy, is determined to get hold of the League crown. Sorry, Jim, but that trophy is soon going to be the property of Rangers Football Club for a long time.

Why did Rangers do so badly in the League last season? The straight answer is our away form was nothing short of diabolical.

For some reason or another we just couldn't put our game together away from Ibrox and we dropped points to teams we really should have hammered.

Rectified

The League Championship flag has not flown at Ibrox for four seasons and that is an unhappy statistic that must be rectified. The title is our main target, but everyone at Ibrox is keen to win everything.

As well as the title we've got our eyes on the European Cup-Winners' Cup, the League Cup and the Scottish Cup.

I don't want to sound like a loud-mouth — goodness knows, football has enough of those at the moment — but I want to stress that Rangers are very close to being an exceptionally good side.

I'll be back in a fortnight when I'll be talking about my international prospects, the World Cup and an Irishman who is anything but daft.

Please join me then...

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SOCCER

ENGLAND winger Peter Barnes has been instructed by his new boss, Allan Clarke, to carry on doing what comes naturally.

"I don't want Peter to change his style," the Leeds United manager said. "I want him to play his instinctive game of flair and excitement."

"I've paid £930,000 for him because he's a quality player who will give us extra width and balance and, most important, more punch in attack."

Those words were music for the talented 24-year-old who nearly returned to his hometown club, Manchester City, only days before Leeds stepped in to pinch him from under the nose of a bitterly-disappointed John Bond.

Barnes explained: "Once I knew Leeds wanted me for my attacking skills and would use me as an out-and-out winger I decided this was the club for me."

"Allan Clarke and his assistant, Martin Wilkinson, have a good line

man. Besides, I think Leeds have much greater potential than City."

Clarke naturally agrees. He declared: "By making the money available, my board have shown they have complete belief in me and my staff and it shows supporters that we mean business."

"The fans know how ambitious I am. I want to be manager of the best team in Europe and to do that I have to have quality players. Peter Barnes is in that category. So is Frank Gray, who I brought back to Elland Road a few months ago."

Clarke's signing of Barnes represents a psychological breakthrough for a club which will try to shed its "defensive" tag this coming season.

But the ambitious 35-year-old boss, who moved from Barnsley less than a year ago after steering them into the Third Division, makes no apology for making defence his first priority last winter.

"I took over a relegation-haunted team and had

no option but to tighten up a rearguard which, to put it mildly, was not over-disciplined," he explains.

"Yet I can honestly say that we concentrated on keeping out the opposition only two or three times. Our misfortune was that we didn't tuck away all the chances we were creating. If we had only converted half of those openings we would have won a lot more friends — and matches."

"But the critics judged us on the fact that we scored only 39 League goals."

'Hungered'

"What needed me is that people thought I'd become defensively-orientated. Me! After 15 years as a player who hungered to attack, to put the ball in the net, I'd hardly be likely to change character, would I?"

"The simple truth was that survival was the name of the game at Elland Road last season. And we

won it. Now we'll use that effort as a springboard for the future."

Actually it's not the first time Barnes has been involved with Leeds. As a 13-year-old he was invited to Elland Road because he showed promise. But after a few weeks his parents decided it was more convenient for him to go to nearby Maine Road.

"It wasn't a case of the famous Revie scouting system missing a bargain," says Barnes.

But that brief flirtation with Leeds possibly influenced the career of this skilful winger. He explains: "From that time I've idolised Eddie Gray, who was then Leeds' 22-year-old outside-left. He was magic. I watched him train as often as I could. His ball control was marvellous. It left a lasting impression on me."

"I've only ever hero-worshipped two people — Eddie and George Best, both left-wingers and both incredibly skilful. I'm sure they gave me the spur to make a name for myself because I always wanted to emulate them."

Peter Barnes is looking forward to playing with Eddie, now at 33 in the veteran class but performing convincingly either at left-back or midfield. With his prompting, First Division defences are likely to find it hot work this season as Leeds aim for the top.

Barnes will do what comes naturally

in sales talk. They convinced me that United will go places and that I can provide a lot of the skill and goals.

"The challenge thrills me. I've enough confidence to believe that their fans will enjoy my style."

"But the main thing about my signing is that I want to help Leeds to win honours. From what I've seen of their set-up, and learned about their management team, the future looks bright."

Barnes, 5ft 10in, 11st and one of the few forwards in this country with the ability and confidence to dominate a game, lives for match days.

'Challenge'

"For me a soccer match is a continual challenge — you against them. Fortunately I'm fairly fast and I've been able to dribble for as long as I can remember. I come alive when I get the ball at my feet. Then the adrenalin really starts to flow."

The son of Manchester City scout Ken Barnes, Leeds' expensive new recruit was tempted to go back to the club which discovered him and sold him to West Bromwich Albion for £748,000 in July, 1979.

But after a lot of thought he decided it was unwise to return to old pastures. "I helped them to win the League Cup in 1976 and had a great time there before moving to Albion."

"If I'd gone back the fans would have expected me to be a miracle



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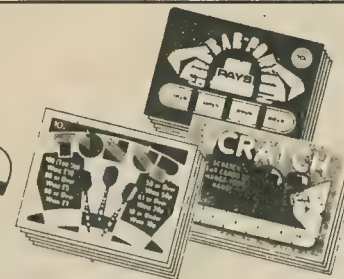
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No more blunders for Morton

Neil Orr (hoops) heads clear for Morton from Parkhead Thistle's Andy Anderson.



Under the shrewd guidance of Benny Rooney, Morton have reached the Semi-Finals of the Scottish Cup and the League Cup in two consecutive seasons as well as cementing their place in the Premier Division.

That's a fair achievement for the part-time Greenock side, but manager Rooney booms: "Satisfied? You must be joking!

"We've still got it all to do. I said last term that this team was capable of winning a trophy in two or three years and I am sticking by that prediction.

"I want something tangible for our efforts and our fans in the trophy cabinet. Then, and only then, will I be satisfied.

"I've got the players here who can go all the way. With a shade more confidence they can beat the best in the land.

"We've proved it in the past and now I want us to go another step forward.

"Two seasons ago I thought we were desperately unlucky to lose to Aberdeen 2-1 in the League Cup Semi-Final at Hampden.

"And last season in the Scottish Cup Semi-Final against Rangers at Parkhead we just didn't get into our stride for some reason or another. We made basic errors and we were punished for them.

"However, you live and learn in this game and if you repeat your mistakes you just don't deserve success."

Rooney's fighting talk is echoed by his players. He persuaded Under-21 defender Neil Orr to sign

a new three-year contract with the club and the player says: "I wouldn't have signed if I didn't think Morton matched my own ambitions.

"I believe Mr. Rooney when he says this club is capable of success. The other players believe it, too, and it's about time we matched those words by doing something about it."

Cut-Price

Unfortunately Morton were the first Scottish club to be hit by the same EEC ruling that saw Arsenal lose Liam Brady to Juventus for a cut-price fee at the start of last season.

"Jim Tolmie, who was forming a good partnership with John McNeil up front, signed for Belgian side SK Lokeren and we didn't get anything like the fee we would have expected had he been under contract," says Rooney.

However, even without the tenacious talents of Tolmie, Morton still have a lot going for them. They aim to live up to the promises of their go-ahead young manager Benny Rooney this season.

The Americans seems to have awards for everything, ranging from the stars of Hollywood to the players of the Soccer Bowl, but they insist they know a good thing when they see it.

Pat Bonner, the young Celtic goalkeeper, played in a week-long tour and completed a four-team tournament by being named Defenceman of the Competition.

Bonner played against the Cosmos (0-2), Seattle Sounders (1-2) and Southampton (2-1) in a hastily arranged trip which was set up on a Wednesday and saw Celtic play their first game in New York on the Sunday!

The players, in fact, had only reported back to training a few days before being whisked over to the States and they showed undoubted and understandable signs of rust, but Bonner was on top form.

Manager Billy McNeill says: "The Yanks really took to Pat and it was great to see him getting something for his efforts.

"This time last season he was just settling into the first team. Now he is a key man, a goalkeeper with a great future.

"His form in America was quite

look at me I couldn't pack my bags quickly enough.

"Things seem to have happened at breathtaking speed recently. Last season I was prepared to start the season in the reserves when Peter Latchford was so unfortunately injured in training and I took his place in the Danny McGrain testimonial match at Parkhead.

"It ended in a goalless draw against Manchester United and I was there for the rest of the season. I was brought into the Eire Under-21 side and played against England at Anfield where we lost 1-0. Still, it was a great thrill to be chosen.

"And I completed my season by picking up a Premier Division medal, looking forward to the European Cup and playing for the full Eire team against Poland."

YANKEE DOODLE BONNER!

outstanding. Pat and Peter Latchford said the Astroturf gave them better footing and that might be the reason for the goalkeepers looking better than the outfield players.

"They said it took a bit of getting used to. Still, the team, after losing in New York and Seattle, certainly did better against Southampton.

"Pat was delighted to accept his award and everyone agreed he fully merited it.

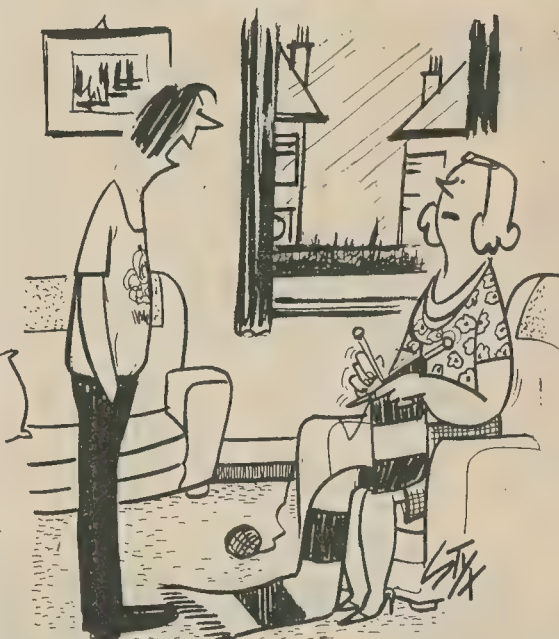
"He is a personality 'keeper and he is going to get better."

Bonner arrived at Parkhead from Southern Irish team Keadue Rovers five seasons ago. English clubs tried to tempt him South of the border, but he says: "There was only one club for me when I realised Celtic were interested.

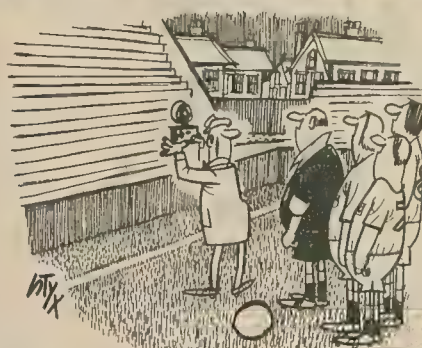
"Like a lot of lads from my neck of the woods — my twin brother included — I was Celtic daft. When I was told they wanted to have a



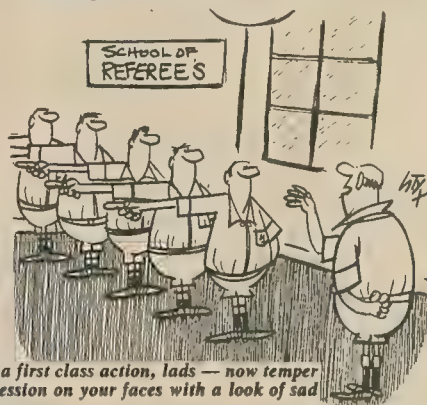
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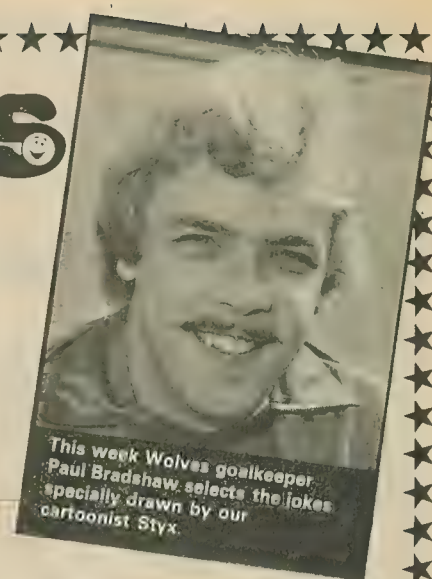
"Didn't I tell you... I'll be supporting Rangers not United this season."



"My paper's starting a new competition... it's called 'Spot the Fan'."



"That's a first class action, lads — now temper the expression on your faces with a look of sad regret."



"Excuse me, may I have a word with you?"

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'A DIFFERENT WEST HAM THIS TIME'

vows Trevor Brooking



It will be like "All Our Yesterdays" when Trevor Brooking steps back on to the First Division stage with West Ham this season.

It is three years since England midfield ace Brooking last tasted the big time in this country. And he admits he has missed it.

"The First Division is the only place to be. Our three seasons in the Second seems like an eternity and we are all glad it's over," he says.

"It will be great to go back to the big atmosphere of grounds like Old Trafford, Villa Park, Anfield, Goodison Park, White Hart Lane and Highbury again.

"That's what you miss most of all — performing on the great stages.

"We know the fact that we romped away with the Second Division Championship with a formidable 66 points last season — a post-War record — will count for nothing when this new campaign gets under way.

"It's what we do from this Saturday against Brighton that matters — nothing else.

"People tell me the quality of the First Division has dropped in the time we've been away from it. We are about to find out if that statement is true.

"Naturally we are confident of doing well. Every team in the land is optimistic at this time of the year — but I don't think ours is misplaced.

"Cynics are claiming that we need two or three new players to make a real impact in the First and we are all aware that manager John Lyall is on the look-out for

reinforcements.

"And I am sure if a top quality player became available then the boss would be more than interested.

"But even with the present staff of players I'm sure we are good enough to hold our own back in the Big League.

"In the past two years we have won the F.A. Cup and reached the Final of the League Cup. We proved our pedigree then by taking out a lot of First Division sides along the way.

"But doing it on a one-off basis is a lot different to doing it week in and week out — and we will have to over a gruelling 42-match programme now.

"Even so, we have added a great deal of consistency and stability to our play in the last 18 months. We are no longer the soft touch a lot of people used to regard us as.

"And we owe it to our fans — surely the best in the business — to do well.

"They have been marvellous to us during the Second Division years and responded to our Championship success last season by giving us the biggest jump in attendances in the country.

"So we want to do well for them as much as for ourselves. We know they will fill Upton Park every week now the glamour sides are coming back to play there — I'm sure we won't let them down.

"It's vital for all of us that we don't put ourselves under pressure from the off. A good start is essential and a nice win over Brighton in our opening match will give us all a terrific boost.

Away games

"We need to get the three points from that, because we follow it with two away games — including one just down the road at Tottenham.

"Although I'm 32 now I have no doubts about my ability to make a useful contribution to The Hammers' cause.

"I found pre-season training a slog — but then I usually do. Even so, it's got to be done, because the work you do in the preparation period sets you up for the rest of the year.

"Although I was unfortunate

enough to suffer a calf muscle injury in a pre-season tournament game against Manchester United in Aberdeen.

"It forced me to miss about three weeks training but I am hopeful that it will clear up before the start of the season.

"Skipper Billy Bonds is older than me. No one need have the slightest worry about him — for he is still the fittest man at the club as he has proved in training.

"Full-back Frank Lampard and striker David Cross are over the 30 mark as well. But they have the quality you cannot replace — ability. They are still good enough for the job ahead.

"And we are all confident the youngsters in the squad will adapt — despite their limited experience in the top flight.

"Ray Stewart and Alvin Martin are hardly seasoned campaigners in the First Division. But both have won full international caps, with Scotland and England respectively, so that proves what they can do.

Outstanding

"Paul Goddard, Paul Allen and Geoff Pike are outstanding young players, while Alan Devonshire (above) should be a revelation against the First Division defences.

"Behind them all big 'keeper Phil Parkes has consistently done the business at the highest level with Q.P.R., West Ham and England and it's great having him around at a time like this.

"Together with John Lyall we have all waited a long time to climb back among the giants of the First Division.

"We have maintained all along that is where we really belong. We now have the chance to prove it — and don't intend to blow it."

Although West Ham have introduced more determination and steel into their game, they still place the emphasis on skill and entertainment — that's why the fans flock to watch them.

At a time when football is going through the most difficult time in its history the fans demand to be given full value for their hard earned money.

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TAKE A BREAK IT'S

QUIZ TIME

WINNERS

The following players have scored winning goals in F.A. Cup Finals. See if you can name their clubs, the year they hit the winners and the opponents.

1. Neil Young
2. Alan Sunderland
3. Ian Porterfield
4. Allan Clarke

5. Charlie George
6. Roger Osborne
7. Jeff Astle

8. Dave Webb
9. Derek Temple
10. Bobby Stokes

COMPUTER PUZZLE

Stan Bowles



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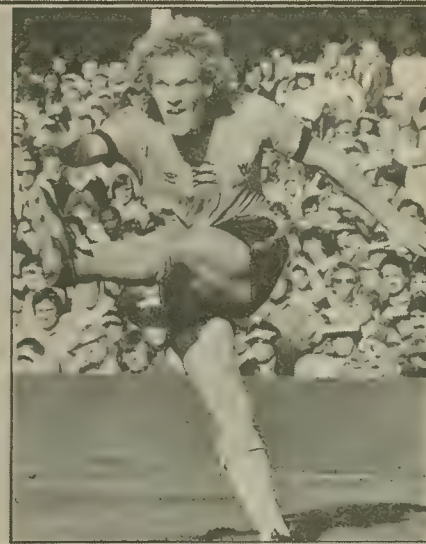
1. Bowles began his career with —, where he played 17 League games.
2. After further appearances for Bury, Carlisle United and Crewe, he signed for —.
3. He made his full England debut against — in 1974.
4. His first goal for his country was against Wales in May, —.
5. — signed him for Orient in the summer of 1980.

ON THE BALL ANSWERS

ACROSS:- (1) Asp. (4) The. (5) Shearer. (9) Downs. (12) Alp. (16) One. (17) Emllyn Hughes. (19) And. (21) Ask. (23) Anfield Road. (25) Err. (26) See. (28) Ewood. (31) Souness. (34) Pal. (35) Spy.
DOWN:- (1) Ata. (2) Shay. (3) Per. (6) Hen. (7) Eel. (8) Tony. (11) Shuffle. (12) Achieve. (13) Posed. (14) Pea. (15) Imps. (18) Nears. (20) Neal. (22) Ken. (24) Room. (27) Ego. (29) Was. (30) Snap. (32) Ups. (33) Ely.

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. Wolves' Andy Gray (right) began his career in Scotland with Dundee before signing for Aston Villa.
2. Brighton have never played in the Fourth Division.
3. Brechin City play their Scottish Second Division games at Glebe Park.
4. Frank Barlow is manager of Chesterfield.
5. Former Sunderland goalkeeper Jim Montgomery represented the full England international side on two occasions.



PRESENT STARS

1. Steve Mackenzie was transferred from Manchester City to which club for £500,000?

2. Tottenham's pre-season plans were rocked when one of their strikers had an emergency cartilage operation . . . can you name him?

3. Alan Ainscow will be lining up for which First Division club this season?

4. Did Arsenal full-back Kenny Sansom (right) make his full England debut against Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales in the 1979 British Championship?



INTERNATIONALS

1. Have Wales ever beaten England at Wembley in a full international (left)?
2. Arsenal's David O'Leary has a brother who is also a Republic of Ireland international. What is his Christian name?
3. Northern Ireland have played Israel in a full international on one, two or three occasions?
4. Which country won the British Championship title last May?
5. Who is Northern Ireland's most capped player?



ANSWERS

TRUE OR FALSE. 1. False — he began with Dundee United. 2. False — they have. 3. True. 4. True. 5. False — he only played at Under-23 level.
PRESENT STARS. 1. West Brom. 2. Garth Crooks. 3. Everton. 4. Wales.
WINNERS. 1. Manchester City v. Leicester, 1968. 2. Arsenal v. Manchester United, 1979. 3. Sunderland v. Leeds, 1973. 4. Manchester United, 1976. 5. Yes, in Manchester United, 1976.
INTERNATIONALS. 1. Yes, in 1966. 10. Southampton v. Everton v. Sheffield Wednesday. 11. Chelsea v. Leeds, 1970. 5. Brom v. Everton, 1968. 8. Ipswich v. Arsenal, 1978. 7. West Arsenal v. Liverpool, 1971. 6. Leeds v. Arsenal, 1972. 5. Sunderland v. Leeds, 1973. 4. Manchester United, 1979. 3. Leicester, 1968. 2. Arsenal v. Manchester City v. Jimmy Bloomfield. Rangers. 3. Portugal. 4. 1974. 5.

PPETER Nicholas is looking forward to the new season as an extension of everything that has happened to him since he made the move North of the River Thames from troubled Crystal Palace to Arsenal last Spring.

Most of all he is hoping The Gunners can maintain the form that has enabled him to boast on the eve of his first season in Europe that he has never played on the losing side for them.

"It can go on, I just hope it does," he said, as he looked back on a run of games that include eight in the League at the end of last season and a handful of tour games and pre-season friendlies.

"I shall be trying to keep the run going as long as I can. I haven't lost at all yet for Arsenal. Not once in any game, which is really amazing. I just hope we can keep it up.

"Coming up to Arsenal has been such a change for me, after Palace, but I have really settled in now and I think I must be a better player for the pre-season training.

"It is hard to say how well we can do though, because of the situation with the players at the club. I am sure we have got the squad for a real Championship

reckons he is the man who deserves the credit for the Welsh international's comfortable transition.

Nicholas, 21, said: "Don Howe has got me in the position I most like to play in and that has made it very easy for me. He has encouraged and helped me a lot. I don't think I have fully adapted yet to the Arsenal game, but I am really working at it."

Last season Nicholas crashed in a spectacular goal for Arsenal at Portman Road to seriously dent Ipswich's waning Championship challenge. It was a bit of a rarity, but one which has helped Nicholas develop a lot.

'Important'

He said: "I've never been known for scoring a lot of goals so I was very pleased with that one. It was a good one to score, in an important game, and my first for the club. It helped me a lot and cemented me with the fans."

Looking ahead to his first true 'big-time' season with a big club, Nicholas admits it is difficult to know which of the three major trophies he most wants to win: the World Cup with Wales, the UEFA Cup, or the League Championship.

Losing out of the question for Nicholas

challenge this season, especially now that David O'Leary is staying. "It should be exciting anyway."

A powerful and highly combative midfield player who is often underestimated when it comes to the finer points of the game, Nicholas rates his new Arsenal coach Don Howe very highly and

He said: "I just hope we can do well in all three. It is a lot to look forward to. I think Wales have a good chance because we have still not conceded a goal in the World Cup.

"And my experience for Wales must help me when it comes to the UEFA Cup, which will be my first go in European club football."

Modesty

Nicholas assesses his own strengths as a player with the modesty of a newcomer to the bright lights, only reckoning his skills as a ball winner worthy of special mention.

He said: "I think my tackling is my real strength. Getting the ball for the other, more skilful players to deal with. I am just a ball winner really, someone who works for the other players around me. Nothing spectacular."

Those who saw his goal for Arsenal at Portman Road might be tempted to disagree. He cracked it in from more than 25 yards and also managed to subdue the talented Ipswich midfield.

Now he has earned himself a chance at a few of the big prizes. And he deserves the chance to extend that winning streak towards some of the biggest trophies in the game...



Russia's Vladimir Bessonov is about to feel the strength of one of Peter Nicholas' determined tackles.

A T 35 years of age Franz Beckenbauer still clings to the hope that he will be recalled to the West German national team for the World Cup Finals in Spain next summer.

And on the evidence brought back by Celtic after a pre-season friendly game in Hamburg, the Kaiser could be there. Celtic lost 3-1 in the Volkspark Stadion, and Beckenbauer was the man they left marvelling over.

As Parkhead boss Billy McNeill insisted: "If West Germany can afford to leave out a player of that ability and class then we must be well down in the world ratings. Our lads just had to learn from watching him and playing against him."

"When you go on to the Continent to play you know that

the major priority is to keep possession. He underlined that for us."

As well as underlining that on the field, the Hamburg veteran made telling points off the field, too. He still maintains that this will be his last season but he wants to be in Spain.

And, on that subject, Beckenbauer proved himself an ally of England boss Ron Greenwood and those others who call for fewer games in Britain.

The Kaiser pointed out: "I am not surprised that the British players find it difficult to play in

the World Cup tournaments. It will not be any different in Spain for them. The Finals come at the very worst time of the year. By then they have played too many club games and almost all of the players are tired. Even a great tournament like the World Cup cannot lift them."

"England have not qualified for the last two Final series and I blame the number of games for that. It was apparent in the European Championship, too, just how exhausted some of their players were."

"The same goes for the other countries, although Scotland have qualified in 1974 and 1978. Perhaps that first time they did respond to the atmosphere here in West Germany a little better than we expected. It was their first time in the Finals for a long time."

"Also it was played in a country where they could feel more at home. Argentina was far away and so very different. This time in Spain the distance from home won't be so great — but for all the Northern European countries there will be problems of playing in the heat of the summer."

"And for all the British players

this is an added burden after the long season. I am surprised that so many games are still insisted on. I would have thought by now that some changes might have taken place."

"Until they do it is hard to see any of the British teams doing really well. They have the ability — I don't doubt that — but I believe that the players are made to compete too often."

As for his own future in the West German team, Beckenbauer is diplomatic. Guardedly he tells you: "I don't want to say too much. I have talked with the coach Jupp Derwall and he knows how I feel. In fact I have spoken to him several times since I came back from New York last season."

'Retire'

"I would like to go to Spain before I retire but I don't know yet. I shall have to wait to see what the national coach says."

The behind-the-scenes' suggestions in West Germany are that Derwall is slightly afraid of Beckenbauer's awesome reputation. And yet there are few signs of off field arrogance from the man who captained West Germany to their World Cup win in 1974 and Bayern Munich to their European triumphs around the same time.

On field it is different. He still has that arrogance that marks a very special star. Yet like every other Hamburg player he had been

**'BRITAIN'S
PLAYERS
ARE TIRED OUT'**
warns Beckenbauer

training three times a day at a special training camp.

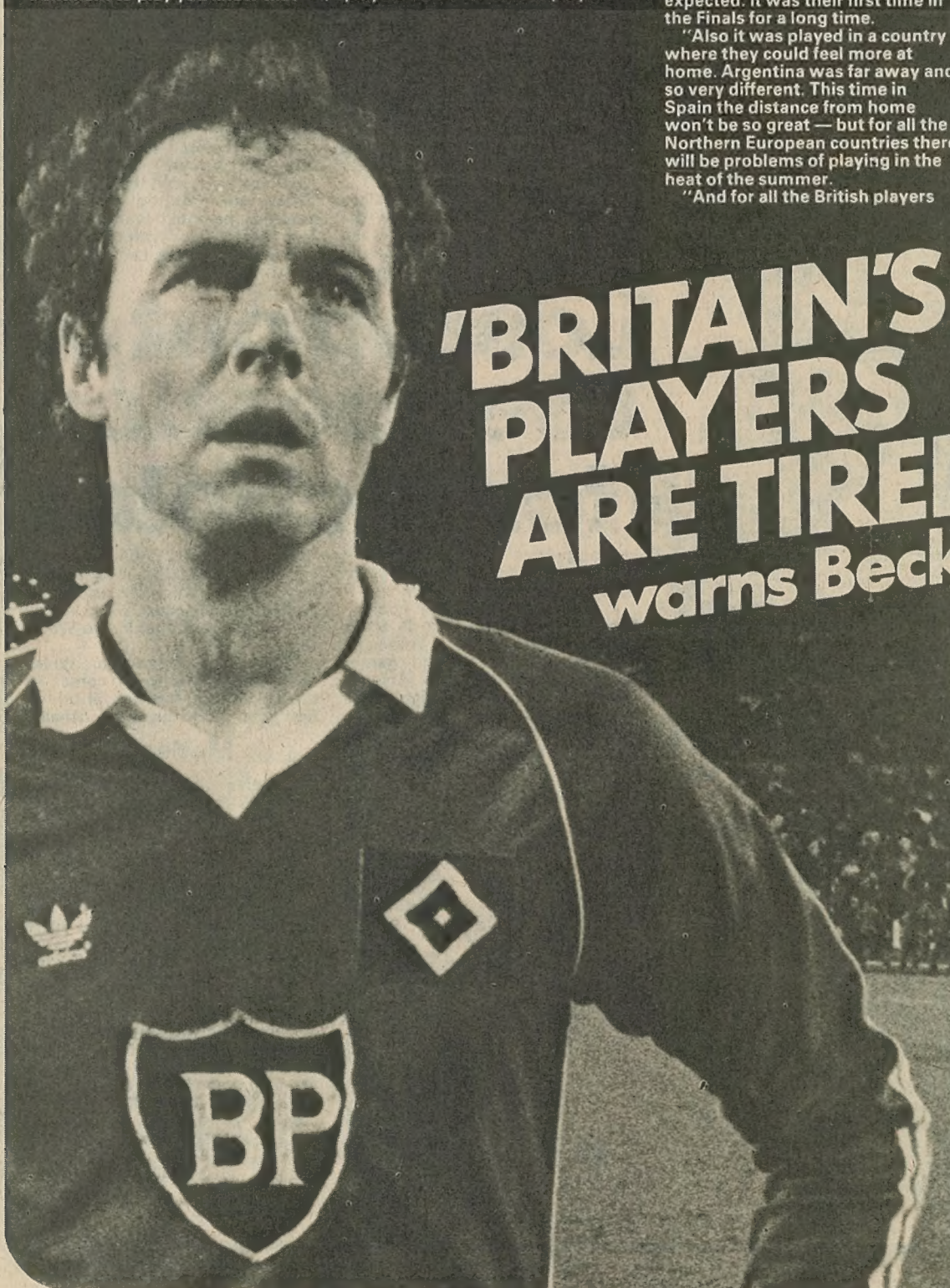
Beckenbauer admits: "There are times when I find it tougher out there on the field because always there are new young players coming up and all of them want to pressure me."

"They are trying to make a reputation for themselves on the way up and I have found it hard, at times, since I came back. But I still have my appetite for the game and for training. I'll do anything that the other players at the club do and I'm still in good condition."

Meanwhile, as well as playing for Hamburg, Beckenbauer is earning part of the vast fee which enticed him back from Cosmos in youth work.

"I have the job of meeting as many young people as possible at the various clinics we have set up in Hamburg, and there I have to talk to them about the dangers of drug abuse or alcohol abuse. This way we try to guide them clear of trouble. We also talk to them about the problems of hooliganism and it is work I have enjoyed."

The main work, though, is still done on the field — as the Celtic players discovered... and as the world might re-discover if Derwall gives the Kaiser his final farewell in Spain.



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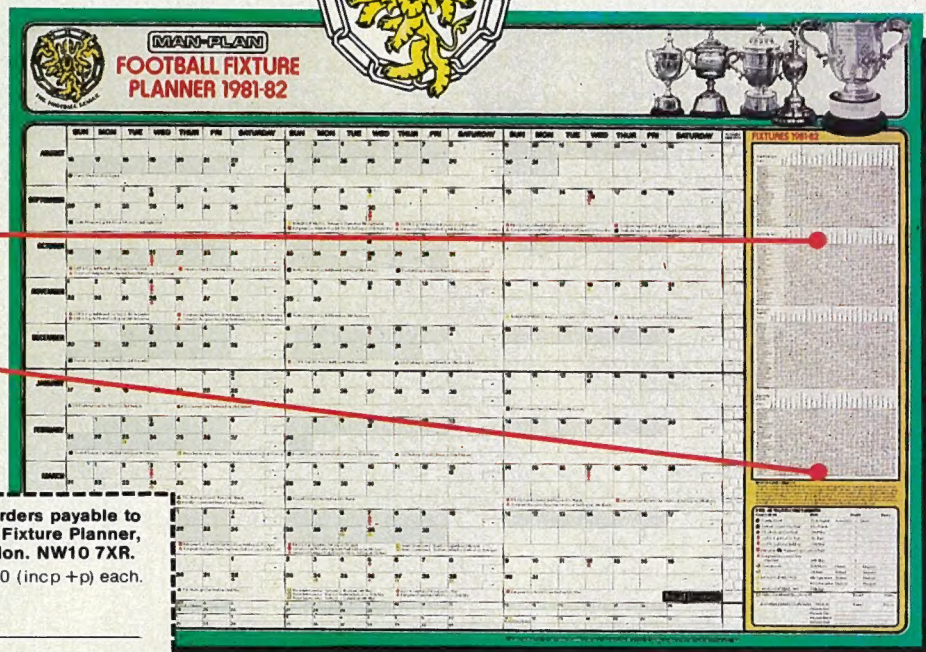
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FULL NAME: Kenneth Swain
BIRTHPLACE: Merseyside
BIRTHDATE: January 28th, 1952
HEIGHT: 5ft 10ins
WEIGHT: 12 stone
MARRIED: Yes
CHILDREN: Sons Stephen and Iain
CAR: Audi Coupe
PREVIOUS CLUBS: Wycombe Wanderers and Chelsea
JOB OR TRADE BEFORE TURNING PRO: PE teacher
NICKNAME: Swainy
FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER: Sunday Observer

FAVOURITE PLAYER: Pele
A PLAYER FOR THE FUTURE: Eamonn Deacy (Villa)
FAVOURITE OTHER TEAM: Everton
FOOTBALL HERO OF CHILDHOOD: Alex Young
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORT: Tennis
OTHER SPORTS PERSON YOU MOST ADMIRE: No one
YOUR BEST EVER ALL TIME XI: Banks, McGrain, Cooper, Beckenbauer, Krol, Gerson,

Bremner, Charlton, Cruyff, Muller, Pele
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH: My League debut for Chelsea v Spurs in 1974
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Missing my only two games last season since joining Villa
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: They're all difficult
FRIENDLIEST AWAY FANS: On Merseyside
BEST STADIUM PLAYED IN: Villa Park

FAVOURITE FOOD AND DRINK: Traditional English dishes and my first cuppa of the day
FAVOURITE SINGERS: Steeley Dan, Ry Cooder, Justin Hayward
FAVOURITE TV STAR: Sue Lawley
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Greek Islands
FAVOURITE TV SHOW: Horizon
BEST FILM SEEN RECENTLY: None that stands out
FAVOURITE ACTIVITY ON DAY OFF: Gardening
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: Ron Saunders
SUPERSTITIONS: None
PRE-MATCH MEAL: Poached eggs
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: On sub's bench for England v Wales in British Championship
PERSONAL AMBITION: To play for England and win the European Cup
IF NOT A PLAYER, WHAT JOB WOULD YOU DO? PE teacher
CAREER AFTER PLAYING: I would like to stay in football in some capacity

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KENNY SWAIN

Aston Villa

Kenny Swain



Villa boss Ron Saunders, the biggest influence on Kenny's career.



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